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EDITORIAL

ZBIG DEAL IN CAMBODIA

The American talent for historical amnesia is rivaled only by the puppyish eagerness with which we devour each new revision of the past—especially when it provides fresh evidence of our virtue. Witness Cambodia, a living hell we have chosen to turn into a kind of postmodern trope: Spalding Gray invites us to swim there; a new volume is called *Cambodia: A Book For People Who Find Television Too Slow*. As for Vietnam, the United States remains obstinately unforgiving. In our collective imagination Vietnam is Mordor: a loathsome wasteland fit only for redemptive Chuck Norris movie fantasies.

The droves of journalists who descended on Phnom Penh recently to witness the withdrawal of Vietnamese troops were forced to confront the prospect that the terrifying Khmer Rouge may now return to power. There followed much editorial hand-wringing about why this should be so. But a comforting illusion was at hand, endorsed by no less an authority than William Shawcross, the author of *Sideshow*. Writing in the London *Spectator*, Shawcross announced that Vietnam bore "the principal responsibility" for the resurgence of Pol Pot's armies of the night.

But the reasons for the restoration lie closer to home. Never mind Nixon's secret bombings or the villainies of his surrogate, Lon Nol; let's start with Zbigniew Brzezinski's obsession with playing the China card against Moscow. In early 1979 he boasted that he had "encouraged the Chinese to support Pol Pot." Without Zbig's help, the Khmer Rouge wouldn't be in a position today to swamp the "non-Communist resistance."

Prodded by Gorbachev, the Vietnamese are on their way home; even Beijing and Moscow are talking to each other. Everyone else seems, painfully, to be coming to terms with their responsibilities in Southeast Asia. When do we start?

SWEDEN-BASHING
Christopher Hitchens

A LETTER TO GEORGE BUSH
Robert Lekachman

THE MEANING OF HIROHITO
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THE OTHER INAUGURAL

PROGRESSIVE VALUES FOR AMERICA

MARK GREEN

America is in transition, even if the executive branch is not. Belying the comfortable metaphor of George Bush's "friendly takeover" of the Reagan Administration, great changes are taking place in the world: global warming, Soviet counterrevolution, movement in the Middle East. At home, America faces stagnant wages and mountainous debt, and among Western countries it ranks lowest in voter turnout and highest in children living in poverty.

At this moment of opportunity and peril, Democrats understandably doubt that Bush can provide imaginative leadership. After all, his quarter-century career is undistinguished by a single idea or cause, and his campaign was without content, his victory without vision. At best we can only hope that his prepresidential training proves to be, as has been said of Wagner's music, "better than it sounds."

And yet, the issue for Democrats isn't really Bush. Nor is the issue even issues. It's values, just as Bush maintained in the campaign—though hardly the flag-waving ones he pushed so shamefully. From the turn of the century, the progressive philosophy has held that a fair and frugal government could improve the quality of our lives by curbing private-sector abuses. As we enter a decade of transition, five principal values should guide the loyal opposition in Washington: strong democracy, demand-side growth, children first, post-cold war peace and respect for law. Together they constitute a foundation for change and a fresh ap-

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LETTERS.

A HOUSE DIVIDED

Jerusalem

There are two points in the article by Daoud Kuttab ["The Struggle to Build a Nation," Oct. 17] which call for a reaction from an Israeli Jew, especially one like myself who has opposed for more than twenty years the horrifying oppression inflicted by my government on the Palestinians and who supports an Israeli withdrawal from the territories occupied since 1967.

First, the position of Kuttab with regard to the Moslem fanatics in the territories is neither factual nor honest. The leaflets of Hamas and other Moslem fanatical groups quite often begin with the most anti-Semitic phrases directed against *all* the Jews in the world, such as "Woe to the Prophets-killing Jews." More, they quote extensively from the notorious *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, a favorite "source" of Adolf Hitler. To be silent about this is inexcusable morally and most stupid politically.

One should add that the position of those fanatics about Palestinian Christians is not very much better than their position about the Jews and that quite obviously they are supported by the Israeli establishment, both the open and the hidden parts of it. There is nothing new in this: In the very period in which Anwar Sadat was the favorite of the Israeli government and of the U.S. media, he published in Egypt the same *Protocols* together with many anti-Semitic books with the most repulsive Nazi-like caricatures of Jews on their covers, to the deafening silence of those in the United States who falsely pretend—for example, in their arguments against Noam Chomsky—to be concerned with anti-Semitism, the Holocaust or whatnot. As a survivor of the Holocaust, permit me to add that the prostitution of the Holocaust, especially by so many Jews but also by some Palestinians, is one of the most sickening things in this whole business.

Second, as an active member of many of the *real* Israeli protest movements, those who try to be concerned with the atrocities committed by our government against Palestinians and with the denial of their most basic rights, and who call these atrocities by their proper names, permit me to express my deep disappointment caused by the exclusive concentration of Kuttab and so many other Palestinian intellectuals on all kinds of diplomacy to the total exclusion of social analysis, including a recognition of basic social facts. Where, for example, in his article is a simple phrase, which we employ all the time, namely: "Two states for two *nations*"? Where is there a simple recognition that we, the Israeli Jews, constitute a nation and a society (and a criminal society *is* still a society, an important point that so many Palestinian intellectuals try to ignore even now) and that, even at a time when our forces are committing fearful crimes, social analysis must be included in any political calculation, indeed must come first? The disappointment and indeed the suspicion of not seeing this basic recognition is the greater since politically a public recognition that, for example, an Israeli-Jewish society exists is not a "concession" in terms of actual political solutions; it does not commit the Palestinian who makes it to any sort of future borders or invidious arrangements, something that I have never asked any Palestinian to do, especially not in the present circumstances. *Israel Shahak*

KUTTAB REPLIES

East Jerusalem

I agree completely with Professor Shahak that the principles of the Islamic group Hamas are abhorrent. Their leaflets do group all Jews in one category, attack and incite against Jews and make mention of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. That is bad enough. However, permit me to make one small point. I believe Shahak is mistaken in saying that Hamas's leaflets "quote extensively" from the *Protocols*. I have read most of their leaflets and translated their forty-page covenant into English. The *Protocols* are mentioned only in passing. The problem, it appears, is that, with all due respect to Shahak, if you depend on the Israeli press rather than reading the original material you will get an exaggerated picture of this issue. Nevertheless, this does not get Hamas off the hook.

It seems to me that Shahak is interested in a comprehensive Palestinian position on the Islamic fundamentalist movement and on the nature of Israeli society. My article, however, was concerned with the *intifada* and the direction it was taking in light of Jordan's disengagement policy. Therefore, my discussion of Islamic fundamentalists and recognition of Israeli nationhood was in terms of how they related to the Palestinian uprising.

In the case of Israel, I believe it is precisely Palestinian intellectuals, whom Shahak criticizes, who have been the forerunners in convincing Palestinian society and the Palestine Liberation Organization of the need to recognize the reality of the existence of Israel as a nation and a society. The latest proof of this is the Declaration of Independence by the Palestine National Council in Algiers, which recognizes the national rights of Jews to a state as outlined in the United Nations Security Council Resolution 181 on partition. *Daoud Kuttab*

OUR HOUSE

Yonkers, N.Y.

It is unfortunate that the brevity of Elizabeth Pochoda's November 21 editorial "Raising Roofs" made it impossible for her to deal fully with the complexity of the situation in Yonkers. Space limitation undoubtedly led the author to leave out such facts as:

1. Real estate developers would be very happy to move the minority poor from the choicest location in Yonkers, namely, the land overlooking the Hudson River. Anyone with a knowledge of real estate, and that includes Judge Leonard Sand, knows that the profits to be derived from gentrification are enormous.

2. Yonkers presently has almost 50 percent of all low-income housing in Westchester County. The Federal government has not fulfilled its promise to help maintain these units, which for the most part are in terrible shape. After a fiasco of this magnitude, it is small wonder that some Yonkers residents are skeptical when they read words such as: "The idea is to scatter these townhouses across several communities and provide their inhabitants with whatever social services—day care, job counseling, etc.—they may need." Pochoda's "idea" and "etc." do not augur well for a community that has too often seen itself betrayed by Federal and local politicians.

3. Many so-called white enclaves in Yonkers are not that segregated at all. In my beautiful Yonkers neighborhood on the east side—the part of the city "intentionally" segregated according to Judge Sand and Pochoda—my neighbors, my husband and I have lived in perfect harmony for almost twenty years with our immediate neighbors, who are black, white and Oriental. One would almost suspect that Judge Sand and the judges of the Appeals Court have never taken much time to visit Yonkers.

However, to be fair, the thrust of Pochoda's editorial has to do with the necessity for a nationwide housing policy. When the author argues for "legislating low-income housing not only for working-class communities like Yonkers but for places like Pound Ridge, New York, where Judge Sand has his country house, and alongside the condos and co-ops of leftish liberals everywhere," I can only applaud and agree wholeheartedly. I would add that not only "leftish liberals" but also rightish conservatives from coast to coast, including President George Bush in Kennebunkport, Maine, and Gulf Stream, Florida, should welcome low-income housing into their communities. All Americans are, or must become, brothers and sisters of the poor and the homeless. *Joan Baumel*

The Nation welcomes letters—typed, double spaced and no longer than 300 words, please. Longer letters may be edited for reasons of space. Our policy is to publish as many letters as space permits, but inevitably a backlog develops, so please bear with us.

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EDITORIALS.

Security Blanket

In "national security" cases, the independent counsel ought to be renamed the dependent counsel. That is the clear implication of special prosecutor Lawrence Walsh's decision to drop conspiracy and fraud charges against Oliver North because the Administration refused to release hundreds of classified documents pertinent to the case. Walsh's move demonstrates that when it comes to the abuse of power, the special prosecutors, like Congress and the American people, are dependent on that oxymoronic phenomenon, the good faith of the executive branch.

Walsh's decision does not necessarily expand the license to commit crimes in the name of national security—that license has always been capacious enough. But the dropping of major charges against North does demonstrate, yet again, that control of information is the most effective weapon of all the President's men in resisting democratic accountability.

The failure lies with Congress. The Classified Information Procedures Act (CIPA), passed in 1980, is supposed to enable the government to prosecute crimes by anyone involved in classified government activities. The act has

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worked in cases where rogue operatives are out for personal profit. In the Iran/*contra* scandal, though, the lawbreakers were executive branch policy-makers. In such cases, the Justice Department has little desire and even less incentive to prosecute. Yet CIPA assigns the decision about admissible evidence to the Attorney General. More generally, Congress refuses to examine the classification process itself, which is clearly out of control. Rampant overclassification denies the legislative branch and the public the opportunity to make informed judgments about national security issues.

The effort to hold the Reagan Administration accountable for North's actions has not quite exhausted itself. Judge Gerhard Gesell has required Attorney General Richard Thornburgh to spell out the reasons for his refusal to release the documents. And Senators David Boren, Joseph Biden and William Cohen have pleaded with Thornburgh to provide a "full explanation." But the Attorney General, who concedes that he has not read the documents in question, is likely to provide only generalities.

If Gesell and Boren et al. were serious, they would have demanded that the Attorney General provide a document known to lawyers as a Vaughn index. Named after a 1973 legal case, it is an itemized list of documents that the government wishes to withhold from the public. A description and summary of every document that Thornburgh refused to release for the North trial would make for compelling reading. Yet neither the judge nor the Senators have indicated that they are interested in such a detailed accounting. As long as Congress does not ask for the information that is legally its due, the executive branch is likely to treat it—and the public—with contempt.

Hard Times

Chief Justice William Rehnquist began the new year by issuing his version of Washington's favorite lament. In his annual report on the Federal judiciary, he complained that current pay levels are driving judges from the bench and dissuading talented lawyers from becoming jurists. His message jibed with the Washington establishment's crusade to increase the salaries not only of judges but of members of Congress and executive branch officials as well.

The argument here is that present and would-be public servants cannot resist the fat paychecks and other blandishments of corporate America. Last month a blue-ribbon Federal commission, made up mostly of multimillionaires, embraced such reasoning and recommended large remunerative hikes. Earlier this month, President Reagan approved the recommendations, which now become law unless both houses of Congress vote against them. Some good people doubtless will be lost to government without such raises, but the convenient notion of a widespread and critical brain drain is overstated.

Those deterred from public service because of the money are almost always mainstream players with the option of obtaining high-paying corporate posts. And they are the ones who share the mind-set Washington's permanent government is so eager to sustain, the Monopoly mentality that has helped fuel the greed so rampant over the past eight years. What Rehnquist and other pay-raise advocates may be fretting about is the prospect of losing these market-oriented citizens to the private sector and the policy impact that implies. Right-wing Representative Newt Gingrich, for instance, usually a staunch defender of fiscal parsimony, favors the pay raises, citing the need to retain conservative judges.

The fact is, the country is endowed with thousands of talented men and women ready to serve in Congress or on the Federal bench—and most of them would regard the yearly salary of $89,500 as quite adequate, given that it is more than what 98.5 percent of the work force earns. These are the people the government should be courting; they are the ones whose commitment is real. The best and the brightest are not in it for the cash.

Counterforce

More than 2,000 people crowded the Penta Hotel in New York City to attend *Tikkun*'s recent conference on "Reconstituting the Progressive Tradition of American Jewish Intellectuals," a powerful affirmation of the magazine's efforts to counter the influence of the *Commentary* crowd on the American Jewish mainstream. In just three years, *Tikkun*'s circulation has reached 40,000, and Michael Lerner, editor of the Oakland-based bimonthly, has become widely known as a forceful critic of Israel's handling of the Palestinian uprising. Last spring, Lerner was kicked out of a meeting of the United Jewish Appeal's Young Leadership Conference for attempting to distribute a *Tikkun* editorial opposing Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. For lobbying members of Congress in favor of an international Middle East peace conference, he earned an explicit rebuke from Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir.

The *Tikkun* organizers had more on their minds than responding to the Jewish right on the subject of Israel. As publisher Nan Fink said at the opening plenary, an equally important concern is "how to revitalize the liberal and progressive forces in the United States." The agenda spanned everything from the cold war to black-Jewish relations and "Jewish and Progressive Values and Their Role in Cultural Creativity." Given the previous weeks' developments in Algiers, Stockholm and Geneva, it was natural that the conference was dominated by the question of how to respond to the *intifada* and the Palestine Liberation Organization.

Answers ranged from Lerner's call for a demilitarized Palestinian state and "negotiations now" between Israel and the P.L.O. to Michael Walzer's insistence that "Jewish nationalism find its moral limit in Palestinian nationalism" and former Israeli Foreign Minister Abba Eban's cautious endorsement of the U.S. opening to the P.L.O. (Though his talk skirted the subject, Eban later told Andrea Barron, a columnist for *The Washington Report on Middle East Affairs*, that he would support a demilitarized Palestinian state.)

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Angered by Israel's repressive measures, fearful for the nation's future and fed up with the American Jewish establishment, many participants were clearly searching for, as author Letty Cottin Pogrebin put it, "a new definition of what it means to be a friend of Israel." Nearly anything could be said as long as it was preceded by a recitation of support for Israel's existence, security, best interests and so on. When one panelist, Eric Alterman, was foolhardy enough to neglect this affirmation before launching into a critique of the power of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, calling it not only bad for Israel but for American Jews and democracy as well, he was startled to find a substantial minority of the audience jumping to the lobby's defense. This seemed to suggest that the same boundary-setting and fear of far-reaching criticism that plagues the American Jewish mainstream has its echo among Jewish progressives.

Thus it was unfortunate that a conference aimed at "reconstituting" a "progressive tradition" avoided some of the harder questions that radicals pose. For example, only Gary Brenner of the Mapam Party was present to represent the Israeli left or peace forces more militant than Peace Now. Nor was Noam Chomsky, an early supporter of the two-state solution, invited. Hence, it was encouraging to hear Walzer's remarks calling for Israel-P.L.O. negotiations, since after the 1982 invasion of Lebanon he wrote that he would "welcome the political defeat of the P.L.O." and believed that "the limited military operation required to inflict that defeat can be defended under the theory of just war." But the question not debated was why it took so long for influential American Jews to come around to the present point of view. At least Jerome Segal, the intrepid philosophy professor from the University of Maryland who helped shape the Palestinian Declaration of Independence, managed to point out during the closing plenary that the 1988 Algiers platform so widely hailed as a breakthrough was in many respects indistinguishable from the 1982 Fez Declaration of the Arab countries. That plan was accepted by the P.L.O. but rejected by Israel and the United States.

If the conference was any indicator, American Jews have more on their mind than the politics of the Middle East or Washington. This was apparent at a packed panel on the creative collision of feminism with Judaism and in the reception given the work of revisionist rabbis like Arthur Waskow and Zalman Schachter. Their rethinking of the meaning of Torah and Jewish tradition is as significant as the changes taking place in lay Catholic and Protestant communities.

The conference participants showed that there is now an energy among liberal Jews that has not been felt in a long time. Ambitious plans were floated for organizations to lobby in Washington for a two-state solution, and a network of progressive Jewish college students was established. Local activists spoke of the need for democratizing the Jewish "moneyocracy" system, which requires that *machers* give large sums to their local Jewish philanthropy before they can have a major say in policy. The forces of conservatism in the Jewish community may still be dominant, but the margin of liberal hope is growing. MICAH L. SIFRY

Rainbow Future

The Rainbow Coalition is undergoing an organizational transition that has far-reaching implications for the progressive movement in the United States. Coalition members agree that it must expand to reflect the interests of nearly 7 million people who voted for Jesse Jackson in the primaries last year. But how do the membership gains of the campaign merge with existing structures? How does the coalition build a politically empowering organization accountable to its expanding base? And what is its relationship to the Democratic Party?

Some activists worry that the coalition is not organizing fast enough, not setting program priorities or flexing its political muscle. Jackson urges action on voter registration, South Africa sanctions, child care and other agreed-upon issues, yet he counsels patience when it comes to restructuring. Nevertheless, next month a commission named in December by the National Rainbow Coalition Board is scheduled to report back with a reorganization proposal.

Most board members agree that the coalition should be a membership organization. The question is, What kind? Jackson favors the "common ground" model, which sets up no ideological tests and thus assumes an ongoing capacity for growth in unexpected places. Jackson believes in "going to the point of challenge"—be it a farm foreclosure, picket line or gay rights march—and forging solidarity. He feels this approach works better than the oft-tried and oft-failed efforts to build a progressive movement with outreach programs and education pegged to an agenda of broad social change.

Tensions have arisen as the coalition tries to cultivate common ground without fencing it off into ideological corrals—the activists in one pen, elected officials in another, for example. Many left activists throughout the country were involved with the Jackson campaign. But some who were not accuse local politicians of shutting them out, and still others thought the campaign detracted from "building the Rainbow." More widespread is the charge, often stated self-righteously by white leftists, that some black elected officials are undermining the coalition by opportunistically riding on Jackson's coattails to advance their own careers.

"If they allow me to stand on their shoulders, I'll give them my coattails," says Jackson. He stresses the generally progressive, though non-monolithic, nature of African-American officialdom: Its representatives fought for the right to vote, campaigned under difficult circumstances and now struggle to deliver basic services at a time of rising need, collapsing inner cities and budget cuts. "Some people," says Jackson, "have the freedom and time to take on cutting-edge issues without the responsibility for everyday survival issues." He calls for "a real appreciation for the value of each patch in the Rainbow quilt."

Many coalition members see an unprecedented opportunity to transform the Democratic Party. As Jackson says, the non-Rainbow Democrats "are not worried that we might leave but that we might stay, and they might have to adjust." One important signal of the party's willingness to

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adapt will be sent early next month, when Democrats pick a national chair to succeed Paul Kirk. The contenders are four mainstream Democrats plus Ron Brown, Jackson's 1988 convention manager.

Jackson and many others in the coalition see the Democratic Party as the most promising electoral vehicle; but they are prepared to adopt new tactics if the promise proves hollow. Liz Blum, co-chair of the Vermont Rainbow Coalition, thinks that taking over the Democratic Party is a "pipe dream." She and many others on the left feel that an electoral agenda should be secondary to building an issue-based movement, and some would seek that goal by beginning now to construct a third party.

Jesse Jackson is at once the leader of the Rainbow Coalition and its core African-American constituent, the de facto Democratic front-runner in the 1992 presidential race and, in the words of one board member, the U.S. leader seen globally as "responsive to people's needs, crises, tragedies."

The Rainbow Coalition is striving to shape a recognized, unified leadership to complement Jackson's special role and strategic spontaneity. The challenge is to build a common ground coalition flexible enough to withstand the political tremors that so often shake the left and strong enough to produce an enduring progressive movement. HOLLY SKLAR

Holly Sklar is a member of the Boston Rainbow Coalition and the author of Washington's War on Nicaragua *(South End Press).*

UNCIVIL LIBERTIES.

CALVIN TRILLIN

A few weeks ago, I turned down an opportunity to worry about the litter in space. It happened when a man who was being interviewed on television said that as many as 7,200 objects, most of them the sort of thing that a good citizen might drop in the nearest trash receptacle, are orbiting the Earth. Just as soon as I heard the man say that, I heard myself say, "Well, none of them belong to me."

I think you could call it an instinctive response, familiar to anyone who grew up with a sibling—a sister in my case—and thus became accustomed to using as his first line of defense, "I'm not going to clean up her mess!" I wasn't denying that there's a problem. The man being interviewed said that if an astronaut who is unscrewing some little thingamajig outside the space capsule happens to drop his glove, the glove doesn't drop. It goes into orbit forever. So it stands to reason that the place needs some tidying.

To appreciate what the litter problem in space is like all you have to do is visualize what would happen if any glove dropped right here on Earth went into orbit instead of dropping. If you want to look on the bright side of that, I suppose there might be a chance of finding a lost glove of your own when it came around again, assuming it hadn't run into anything on the way, but the odds on that would be pretty long. I can't think of anything else on the bright side. The gloves lost by my children alone would be enough to turn the sky dark with gloves. You couldn't walk down the street without being pummeled by fancy silk gloves and heavy ski gloves and catcher's mitts. The sides of skyscrapers, windows and all, would be covered with layer after layer of third graders' mittens.

So I wasn't doubting that the man on the news was talking about a genuine problem. But I thought the most honest and straightforward thing to do was to explain to him right away that I wasn't planning to treat it as my own personal problem right at that time. The way I felt about it was this: I don't expect the National Aeronautics and Space Administration to worry about my Diners Club bill, so I'm sure they don't expect me to worry about their space litter.

"After all, I didn't lose any gloves up there," I said to my wife, when I explained to her that I wasn't going to concentrate a lot of my concern on the junk in space. "In fact, the more I think about it the more I think that space may be the only place I've never lost a glove. If I had caused any of the litter, you know I'd be the first one trying to figure out how to get it cleaned up. But remember what my Army sergeant used to say when we were policing the general area. He said, 'The guy who dropped it is the guy who's going to pick it up.'"

"You always told me that when you were policing the general area your Army sergeant said, 'If it'll move, pick it up; if it won't move, paint it,'" my wife said.

"Well, the principle's the same," I said.

"It seems to me the principle's completely different," she said. "One way, you're responsible only for what you dropped. The other way, you're responsible for everything, whether you dropped it or not."

I realized she was absolutely right, so I said, "You had to have been in the Army to understand."

Then I started trying to figure out what I could do about the litter in space. At just that moment, I suppose, NASA started trying to figure out what it could do about my Diners Club bill.

"I was thinking maybe we could send people up to stand on space stations with large versions of butterfly nets," I said to my wife. "On the other hand, not much of that stuff is likely to come close enough to take a swipe at. After all, there's a lot of space in space. Thus the name."

"I'd keep that idea to myself, if I were you," my wife said.

"I don't suppose it would be practical to put rugs in orbit to sweep it under," I said. "Also, you've got the problem of where the under is in that situation."

"Maybe you shouldn't treat this as your personal problem," my wife said. "Remember what your sergeant said."

"I think you're right," I said. "When it comes right down to it, the people who have been there in space made the mess. And if they didn't, it must have been my sister."

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Let Us Begin

EDWARD SOREL

JOHNSON PROMISED PEACE...
NIXON SWORE HE HAD A SECRET PLAN...
...TO END THE WAR...
FORD PROMISED HE WOULDN'T PARDON NIXON...
CARTER PROMISED HE'D STOP INFLATION...
...REAGAN PROMISED TO BALANCE THE BUDGET...
...AND NOW BUSH IS PROMISING A KINDER, GENTLER AMERICA!!!
FOREWARNED IS FOREARMED!

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MINORITY REPORT.

CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

The cold war may wax and wane, China may move from being official enemy to official chum, the armaments industry may succeed in defining the strangest regimes as certified "moderates," but through it all the American right maintains a permanent, visceral hostility to one small, durable country: Sweden.

Ever since President Dwight Eisenhower made a demagogic, philistine attack on Swedish social democracy, contrasting its road to serfdom with the American way and saying that its citizens had an addiction to suicide and despair, Sweden has been a target of ignorant abuse from conservatives. A good recent example was offered by *The New Republic*, which seems more and more to aim at annexing the heavy sarcasm and witless sneering that were once the special signifiers of the *Commentary* style. Furious at Sweden's role in sponsoring talks between American Jews and the Palestine Liberation Organization, the magazine advised its readers that Sweden had been "neutral" in World War II.

So it counts as a minor but instructive irony of history that two recent foreign policy "breakthroughs"—both claimed as successes by the Reaganites—were made possible partly by consistent, active Swedish diplomacy. Both the "mutual recognition" strategy for the Palestine conflict and the "mutual disengagement" solution for the Angola-Namibia one, imperfect as both are, owe a great deal to Swedish efforts and Swedish internationalism.

Sweden's role in the Middle East conflict goes back to 1948 and before, with the appointment of Count Folke Bernadotte as the United Nations' mediator in the partition argument. Bernadotte had been Raoul Wallenberg's deputy during the tense and bitter struggle to save the Jews of Hungary from the Final Solution, and he was personally responsible for securing the release of thousands of Jews from Bergen-Belsen in the closing months of the war. The use of Swedish passports and Swedish neutrality for this purpose would, I imagine, not be thought contemptible by *The New Republic*. I suspect that Bernadotte's exemplary role in the Wallenberg mission would be better known if he had not been murdered on the orders of Yitzhak Shamir in 1948. (Nobody could accuse Shamir of being neutral in World War II. His Stern Gang offered a military alliance to Hitler against the British.)

After the 1956 invasion of Egypt, it was a Swede, U.N. Secretary General Dag Hammarskjöld, who brokered the Israeli withdrawal from Sinai, thereby saving the stupid Eisenhower's bacon. After the 1967 war the U.N. mediator was Gunnar Jarring. Sweden's involvement in the question is thus a rather more mature and patient one than most countries could claim. When Sweden's Foreign Minister, Sten Andersson, sponsored the December meeting in Stockholm between Yasir Arafat and some American Jewish activists, he was building on a considerable tradition. One of those present at the occasion told me that the whole atmosphere changed when Menachem Rosensaft, founder and chair of the International Network of Children of Holocaust Survivors, introduced himself and said, "I was born in a concentration camp. My life was saved by Count Folke Bernadotte."

In the case of Namibia and Angola, pundits are already queuing up to award the palm to "constructive engagement" and to the fearlessly soft attitude displayed by Chester Crocker toward apartheid. This is all nonsense. Credit for the agreement belongs to the South-West Africa Peoples Organization (Swapo), which has refused to buckle despite decades of foreign occupation and which has created a movement that does not consider race or tribe when defining Namibian citizenship. Independence on these terms could have been won years ago if it were not for Crocker's procrastination and Reagan's attempt to change the subject to the presence of Cuban forces in Angola. Here again, the United States dogmatically extended diplomatic recognition to one side only—South Africa's. Here again, without "neutral" mediators American policy would have deservedly become the victim of its own flagrant bias. An important participant was Bernt Carlsson, U.N. Commissioner for Namibia, who worked tirelessly for free elections in the colony and tried to isolate the racists diplomatically. Carlsson had been Secretary General of the Socialist International, and International Secretary of the Swedish Social Democratic Party. He performed innumerable services for movements and individuals from Eastern Europe to Latin America. His death in the mass murder of the passengers on Pan American Flight 103 just before Christmas, and just before the signing of the Namibia accords in New York, is appalling beyond words.

In Sweden a few years ago, it was claimed by social scientists and physicians that for the first time in history you could not tell the social class of a child by examining its health record and rate of growth. Ought this not to be considered a modest, even a boring, achievement? It is common sense, after all, that a child should not suffer for its parents' disabilities or misfortunes. (We have preachers and savants who dilate endlessly on the sanctity of family and childhood but who tolerate a system in which a casual observer can correlate a child's social origin with its physical well-being.) I must say that I doubt whether Sweden would be so trusted on the international scene if it did not have a citizenry which turns out to vote at a 90 percent rate, and which has abolished at least the major injuries of a class system.

Yet the conservative intellectuals of a country poisoned by empire and riven by class have no shame in denouncing the Swedes. After Eisenhower's sneer came the hate campaign against Prime Minister Olof Palme for his temerity in opposing the Vietnam War and sheltering draft resisters. (These were the years when Sweden was thought not to deserve an American ambassador.) Further insults were directed at Stockholm because of its opinion about a nuclear-free Europe, and because of its skepticism about the great American anti-"terrorist" crusade. You might think a country that had lost Bernadotte, Hammarskjöld, Palme and now Carlsson to violent death would require no lectures on how the world is a dangerous place, least of all from the forces who have done so much to make it so.

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ARTICLES.

A LETTER TO GEORGE BUSH

F.D.R. Changed, And So Can You

Dear President Bush:

In 1932, presidential candidate Franklin Delano Roosevelt assaulted the hapless Herbert Hoover before the farmers of Sioux City, Iowa, with these flaming words: "I accuse the present Administration of being the greatest spending Administration in all our history. It is an Administration that has piled bureau on bureau, commission on commission, and has failed to anticipate the dire needs and the reduced earning power of the people." In Pittsburgh a few weeks later, Roosevelt informed unemployed steelworkers that "I regard reduction in Federal spending as one of the most important issues of this campaign. In my opinion, it is the most direct and effective contribution that government can make to business."

The familiar sequel? Deficit spending, public works, public housing, massive relief programs, the National Recovery Administration, the Tennessee Valley Authority, the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation and the Social Security Act—the foundation of our rickety welfare state. In truth, bureau upon bureau, commission upon commission. Accounted one of our great Presidents, Roosevelt was never hobbled by that foolish consistency which is the hobgoblin of little minds.

Neither should you be. I assume that you aim in your high office to do more than complete your résumé and preserve the country from Dan Quayle. To be a good, even an excellent President, you must confront squarely the budget and the trade deficits. There are economists who will reassure you that the budget deficit is ever so slowly shrinking and that as a percentage of G.N.P. the Japanese deficit exceeds ours. True, but irrelevant. The Japanese finance out of domestic savings not only their own deficit but a large hunk of ours. Our trade deficit declines at a painfully slow rate. It enables the Japanese and other foreigners to gobble up American companies and real estate with the surplus dollars they continue to earn. In 1980 the United States was a creditor nation, as befits a superpower. It is now the world's largest debtor, a status once reserved for Mexico and Brazil. Our economy has become hostage to the whims of unsympathetic financial types in Japan and Europe. Right back to the nineteenth century.

Because we borrow from foreigners, the Fed must keep interest rates high enough to continue attracting funds from Asia and Europe. But high interest rates close the new housing market to middle-income families. They make it more expensive to invest in new plant and technology in the United States than it is in Japan and West Germany. Our deficits steadily erode our international competitiveness. Billions are available for leveraged buy-outs that profit investment bankers, lawyers and corporate insiders. Who's interested in new technology and investment in plant and equipment? What to do?

I'll wager that you know what comes next. The T-word. Yes, taxes must rise. I sympathize with your quandary. The nation read your lips. Is the citizenry ready to read them again for a sharply revised message? Roosevelt followed a wildly unpopular President. Congress, panic-stricken by the deep crisis, panted for legislation it could enact without reading. F.D.R. was a politician of fabulous charm. You perforce will operate within a far less favorable context. Ronald Reagan, the most successful showbiz act of the century, continues to mesmerize the public. Your crises are simmering, not yet on the boil. The new Congress will be surly and uncooperative. Your charm is unfabled. Willie Horton, the Pledge of Allegiance, the A.C.L.U. and Boston Harbor got you elected. They will not help you govern. Quite the contrary.

Here is what you should do. On day two of your Administration, you should assemble Fed chair Alan Greenspan, Treasury Secretary Nicholas Brady and the Congressional majority and minority leaders, including your old enemy Bob Dole. Sketch the deal. You will within days present a credible deficit reduction proposal. Nodding significantly at the Fed chair, you will express the hope that the proposal will not only reassure foreign investors and central bankers

DRAWINGS BY MONICA INCISA

Robert Lekachman, a frequent Nation *contributor, teaches economics at Lehman College of the City University of New York.*

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but enable him and his colleagues to push interest rates downward. Suspense mounts. What are the specifics?

Spending first. Since Social Security is out of bounds, only Pentagon funding offers the prospect of significant expenditure savings. Accordingly, you plan to lop $15 billion off the military budget by curtailing Star Wars and canceling some of the more unworkable, duplicative weapons systems that the contractors, generals and admirals have cooked up. To find the rest of the revenues, it is tax time. By all odds, the most equitable fund-raiser would be a 40 percent levy on incomes of more than $200,000. Their recipients are the folks who profited most from Kemp-Roth and the 1986 tax "relief." I don't want to try your patience, so here are some second-best alternatives. If you take money away from people, try to persuade them that it's in a good cause. A 50-cent-a-gallon hike in gasoline taxes would yield $50 billion. California's voters just increased state taxes on cigarettes by a whopping 350 percent. I am addicted to martinis but am willing to make patriotic sacrifices. Clap another $1 impost per liter on gin, bourbon, Scotch, rye and vodka. Post modest extra levies on wine and beer.

Public policy justifies any or all of those three excises. More expensive gasoline will discourage unnecessary driving, penalize speeding, promote fuel efficient cars and thus reduce the size of the trade deficit and our dependence on imported oil. Inveterate smokers and hardened drinkers are unlikely to be deterred by the increased costs of their addictions, but the young may never contract death-dealing habits if the price barrier is high enough.

The Gramm-Rudman budget reduction target for 1989 falls anywhere between $36 billion and $55 billion, depending on the analyst and the date of the forecast. Even the largest figure understates the deficit. You will need big bucks to bail out moribund thrifts, clean up the Pentagon's dangerously radioactive nuclear plants and fund the latest war against drugs, not to mention restoring Boston Harbor to a condition suitable for Republicans.

And so far you have done nothing to materialize your dream of a kinder, gentler America. You yearn to be our Education President. A suggestion or two. Increase Federal support for inner-city schools. Widen existing loan and grant programs for low-income college students. Our disordered, prodigiously expensive health care nonsystem fails to protect 37 million Americans and inadequately shields millions of others against serious illness. The working poor are especially vulnerable—their employers provide few or no health benefits and their incomes are too high to qualify for Medicaid. A full solution requires the sort of comprehensive coverage available in Canada and every other industrial society except South Africa. For the time being, states should be urged to extend Medicaid coverage to working families earning less than $15,000, or half the national median income. The states will comply only if the Federal government picks up the tab. One more charge on your budget.

Then there is housing. During the Reagan years, Federal support for low- and middle-income housing practically ceased, and the homeless population in suburbs as well as cities, in dangerously radical Massachusetts as well as staunchly conservative Orange County, California, exploded. At least 3 million are homeless, including many whole families, few of them out of yearning for fresh air, the hypothesis of good old Ed Meese. I hate to say this, but the private sector lamentably has failed to build affordable housing for low- and middle-income families. Even conservative economists grudgingly concede that when a market demonstrably fails, public intervention is justified. More Federal dollars for subsidized low-income apartments and homes are a prerequisite for the solution of homelessness and the plight of low-income Americans. Let's hold the details for my next letter. There is also a crying need for day care, a problem you recognized during your campaign. The infrastructure is crumbling, including the interstate highway system, and the demand is urgent for more mass transit.

You will be pleased to read that my next piece of advice costs nothing. Probably sooner than later a vacancy or two or three will appear on the Supreme Court. *The Wall Street Journal* and other crazies will urge you to nominate the militantly antiabortion Senator Orrin Hatch, counting on the Senate's clubbiness to get him confirmed. Nobody expects you to select Laurence Tribe or Herman Schwartz, but numerous conservative law school scholars and sitting judges enjoy the respect of liberals and would win Senate approval without risking another Bork episode.

Millions who voted for you told the pollsters that they had hoped for a better candidate. Your devoted nonadmirer George Will used a column to deliver the verdict that you were really no better than your loathsome campaign. *The Economist*, usually sympathetic to Republicans, commented that "the uncomfortable feeling remains—that George Bush, taunter of the little man from Massachusetts, may not have the will and the spirit to be the big leader that America now needs."

I am an optimist. You, a longtime moderate, were reborn a Reaganaut. Then, in a few short months, you transformed yourself from a wimp to the Tyrant of the Tube, confounder of Dan Rather and worthy debating opponent of the little man from Massachusetts. I hope, I try to believe, that you are capable of still another metamorphosis. My very best wishes.

Robert Lekachman

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DEATH OF AN EMPEROR

Do Non-Japanese Fear the Flame?

CHARLES SHIRŌ INOUYE

If death occasions a remembrance of things past, then the passing of the Showa Emperor recalls what has been the most cataclysmic reign of Japan's history—from the Roaring Twenties through the Depression, World War II, the occupation, up to today's unprecedented prosperity. But the old photographs (the young, uniformed Hirohito riding on his white horse; a diminutive and much older Hirohito dressed in a three-piece suit and standing next to Gen. Douglas MacArthur) tend to push everything but the war into the background.

Looking back to Pearl Harbor and the Potsdam Declaration, the Japanese and American press have recently allowed themselves to consider at length the question of the Showa Emperor's culpability as a war criminal. That they pose this question now, forty-four years after the fact, is rather curious. Perhaps the issue is still alive not because of the problems of history but because its sharp point is directed toward the future. This in turn may be because non-Japanese are insecure about the future course of a nation that still chooses to take its identity from the symbol of the emperor.

If postwar Japan has succeeded in "bearing the unbearable" (Hirohito's profoundly eloquent term for surrender to the allies), the United States has been largely unsuccessful in correcting the uncorrectable: purging the imperial mystique. The Japanese are still Japanese; and the emperor system, despite what many assume, still burns with a small and delicate flame. Could there be hidden in our questions about Hirohito's criminality a fear that this flame will once again rage out of control?

Certainly, the emperor system is not easy for Americans to appreciate. It smacks of the ethnocentric and lends itself too easily to Orientalism. By propagating the idea that the Japanese spirit, transmitted and symbolized by the emperor, is unique and ultimately opaque to outsiders, the Japanese themselves feed the flame of those who, sympathetic or not, dwell on the imperial cult. It is also easy to go too far in trying to discredit this sentimentality. By ignoring the emperor's function as a symbol, we preclude our understanding of the civilization that radiates from it.

Who was Hirohito? What exactly was his function? The Japanese philosopher Watsuji Tetsurō's insightful if overtly ideological analysis suggests that the Emperor of Japan is both more than human and something less than what most Americans would call a god. He (or she) does not have the absolute power of Yahweh, the Prime Mover or Allah. He is closer to a shaman, not infallible but still the living medium

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between Japan's infinite past and eternal future.

Hirohito was said to be clumsy. His father, the Taishō Emperor, became mentally incompetent. But fallible or not, they were by nature worthy of worship since, as Watsuji put it, the emperor embodies the sacredness of the Japanese community itself, not the sacredness of his personal will. His function is to produce consensus rather than to dictate; and he does this simply by existing and by performing the ceremonies of state that connect the past with the future and the Japanese to one another.

Emperors have an amazing rapport with their people because, as Watsuji argued, the imperial institution evolved from a uniform political culture that in turn grew out of a still more ancient and more or less independent religious unity. In other words, the emperor evolved from within the Japanese culture eventually to become the "objective correlative" for the civilization itself. As such, the emperor may not be jailed, hanged or otherwise intimidated by those, like Americans, who are excluded from the kinship group.

This is not to say that the imperial house hasn't seen hard times. But it has been preserved by every dominant political power in Japan—from the most potent medieval shōgun to the U.S. occupation forces. General MacArthur realized the difficulty of governing a nation with no center. In a 1946 telegram to President Dwight Eisenhower, he warned that Hirohito's indictment "will unquestionably cause a tremendous convulsion among the Japanese people, the repercussions of which cannot be overestimated. He is a symbol which unites all Japanese. Destroy him and the nation will disintegrate." MacArthur predicted that if the Emperor was executed guerrillas would take to the hills and "a minimum of a million troops would be required . . . for an indefinite number of years" to calm the rebellion. MacArthur prevailed.

Hirohito was spared on condition that he publicly renounce his divinity. Many Japanese became disillusioned with the imperial mystique when he did so, helping create what MacArthur saw as a "spiritual vacuum." Yet despite the general's naïve hope that this emptiness would be filled by the Emperor's conversion to Christianity, the Korean War and the requirements (of Americans) to rebuild Japanese industry as quickly as possible forestalled Japan's need to find a new center. MacArthur's commitment to rigorous social leveling softened as rebuilding became the principal concern. Conservatism, "economic animalism" and consumerism dominated the mainstream, while the radical left and right, new religions, the new theater and so forth developed around the cultural edges. Japan has endured much since the war, but one thing it seems not to have experienced is a radical intellectual or ideological upheaval.

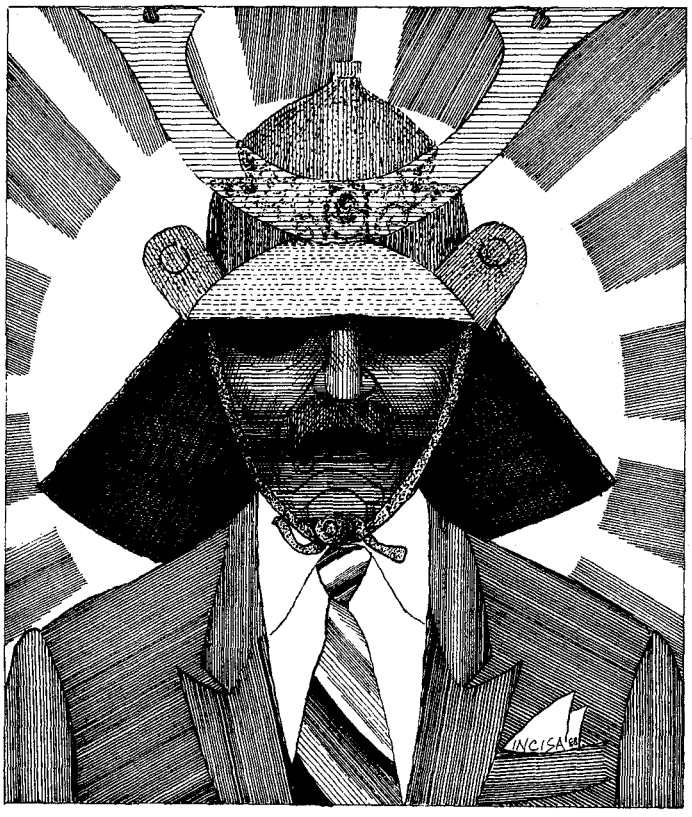
What does the institution built around the emperor mean to the Japanese today? David Titus, author of *Palace and Politics in Prewar Japan*, sums it up this way:

> Many Japanese feel that the emperor has no relation or meaning to their lives or to a modern and democratic Japan. Some believe that the emperor, by his very nature as a hereditary monarch, contradicts democracy, while others still believe that a resurgence of Japanese fascism or absolutism is possible so long as the imperial institution continues to exist. But the vast majority of Japanese citizens, including even those who do not hold positive sentiments toward the emperor, favor the status quo or an even more "popularized" emperor and imperial family.

In short, the center holds as the symbol continues to express itself through imperial ceremony and public appearances. And yet the symbol is *articulated* by no one, except through extraordinary intellectual effort. This is because consensus is the ultimate value in the Japanese system; and in cases where general agreement occurs naturally, consensus is by habit silent, sealed away from that which is not Japanese, excused from dialogue and affronted by requests for explanation. Sharing so much, the Japanese can speak to each other *hara gei*, "stomach to stomach," without words. But in their communication with outsiders they have tremendous problems. As my Japanese friends tell me, "I get tired of talking with Americans. You have to say so much before they get the point."

The influence of imperial symbolism on this sort of insider/outsider mentality continues to be profound. The Japanese want to belong, and the largest group to which most of them belong has the emperor at its center. Consequently, being socially fulfilled in a circle larger than this is difficult for them to imagine. It is hard, in other words, for them to be both good Japanese and good citizens of the world.

It is, in large part, this circle that American businesses encounter when they try to penetrate the tightly knit Japanese market. The Japanese take care of (and are aided by) their own before extending favors to outsiders, and this partially explains Americans' inability to break into established distribution channels. Because it is also next to impossible to establish new channels, the only real solution for the U.S.



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entrepreneur is to become "Japanese." But this is easier said than done. The Japanese may praise the crudest *konnichi wa* ("hello") coming from the mouth of a foreigner, but they feel uncomfortable with or even fearful of those who learn to speak their language fluently—because the code has been mastered and the circle of identity broken.

If no interaction with the rest of the world were required of the Japanese, the United States could walk away from the matter. But today, no country is a political island—certainly not Japan—and the problem is to make the Japanese realize this. Having established the world's premier economy, Japan is once again at a crossroads in its relation with the international community. No one seems to know where Japan is headed; but, based on a decoding of the imperial symbolism and on an understanding of the emperor's continued defining influence on the Japanese civilization, certain predictions can be made.

The first possibility is that Japan, unable to exist outside its own context and sphere of consensus, will extend that context to the rest of the world. It will, in other words, attempt to establish rules of communication and behavior that can be controlled to its liking. To a certain extent this already is happening as Japanese business interests require many Japanese to live abroad. The buying into Manhattan, Los Angeles and Hawaii can also be seen as part of this process.

A second possibility is a retreat into established cultural and ideological borders. At the urging of its trading partners, Japan is trying to increase domestic demand (for its own and for foreign products) and to raise the standard of living. But, again, to what extent can Japan isolate itself economically? Do we really want the Japanese to go home and leave the United States alone? We might argue that, intellectually, Japan has never really broken out of its isolation. Having absorbed much from the rest of the world, it has given back surprisingly little—and never explained itself in a satisfying way. Being, to use Roland Barthes's terms, an empire of signs, Japan has conversed with the world community using not words but things, products that seem to speak to our checkbooks but not necessarily our minds.

Finally, a third and very different possibility is the adjustment of the imperial symbolism to accommodate a more inclusive definition of Japan's identity. Modifying the imperial institution has been proposed by the novelist Oe Kenzaburō and others whose feeling for humanity allows a wider notion of what it is to be Japanese. The continued existence of other monarchies suggests that it might be possible for Japan to retain its emperor system and the culture attached to it while embracing a more generous world view. What the Japanese need to understand, in other words, is that non-Japanese are neither more nor less human than themselves.

This is not such a new idea. Yet the continuing cry among Japanese intellectuals for an "international" perspective has remained an elitist concern, all talk and no substance. If Japan wants to affirm the world in all its variety, why haven't the internationalists addressed the problem of Japan's ethnic Korean population? Why does former Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone altogether deny the existence of any ethnic minorities (such as the aboriginal, non-Mongoloid Ainu) within Japanese society? And why are Japanese history books being rewritten to sanitize Japan's 1930s bloodletting in East Asia?

The success of internationalism will turn largely on the reordering of educational priorities. Such reform will have to be rubber-stamped by the Ministry of Education, but the curriculum reformers must depend on suggestions from the outside since the desire for consensus tends to keep everyone tongue-tied and symbol-bound. "Japan will not move," a professor of American literature at Kobe University once told me, "unless somebody from the outside starts the ball rolling. We all know what needs to be done, but no one wants to be the first to say it."

Enter the eloquent Americans. But if any of us actually feels driven to approach Japan on the issue of its self-definition and world citizenship, let him or her speak from an understanding of who the Japanese have agreed for centuries to be. Only by first demonstrating our knowledge of Japan's emperor system will we be able to influence the formulation of a Japan that is yet to come. □

Values

(*Continued From Front Cover*)

proach as much at odds with prevailing conservative orthodoxy as Copernicus was with Ptolemy.

Strong Democracy. For the United States to fulfill its revolutionary promise, citizens need to adhere to the twin principles of patriotism—participation and mutuality.

A century ago, 80 percent of eligible Americans voted (about the current average turnout among our Western allies). In 1960, it was 63 percent; in 1988, 50 percent; and in the last nonpresidential election, 33 percent. Americans who once crossed the oceans to fight for democracy now don't cross the street to exercise it. How do we know when a democracy is dying? Surely one measure is the number of its residents who consider it worthwhile to choose the representatives who govern their lives. If too few vote, however, will officials know what is in the broadest national interest? Will some communities fail to be heard—while others are heard too loudly? If a 50 percent turnout is still a democracy, is 33 percent? Ten percent? What about when Americans with annual incomes of less than $5,000 are half as likely to vote as those earning more than $50,000, giving the affluent one and a half ballots each compared with the poor?

Two of the reasons for this decline of participation are registration requirements and political action committees.

Cumbersome voter registration laws were erected a century ago to discourage new black and immigrant voters. Yet while other laws with an invidious intent, such as literacy tests, have been prohibited, registration laws endure. Isn't it foolish, for example, that 500 high-school students each separately try to find their way to one Board of Elections to

Mark Green is president of the Democracy Project, which this month is publishing America's Transition: Blueprints for the 1990s, *from which this article is adapted.*

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register rather than having one board representative go to the school to register them in a day?

Also, the proliferation of PACs—almost half of all members of Congress get at least half their funds from legislatively interested PACs—discourages participation. Citizens may not bother voting when their representatives seem more interested in their contributors than in their constituents. Officeholders predictably don't go out of their way to bite the hand that funds them. The result: Congress tilts to organized interests rather than average citizens; good people are priced out of seeking public office; Congress suffers staleness as insulated incumbents serve near-lifetime tenures; and voters turn off—e.g., while one in three voters thought their voice didn't count in 1966, according to a Harris poll, now two out of three believe so.

"The solution to the problems of democracy," Governor Al Smith of New York once said, "is more democracy." Using the Smith prescription, the White House and Congress should enact Senator Alan Cranston's Universal Voter Registration Act, further reduce or eliminate PAC influence, provide for free TV time for general election Congressional candidates and schedule elections on nonwork days—say, the second Saturday in November. Call it Democracy Day. To enact this empowerment program requires only that Democrats in the Congress vote their beliefs and that Republicans, long frustrated at their minority status because the PACs entrench incumbents, vote their self-interest.

As for mutuality, a strong democracy needs to emphasize that citizens have not only rights but obligations. To sit on juries. Pay taxes. Obey laws they don't like. Assist those worse off. Mutuality also means meeting reasonable conditions if receiving a Federal benefit, especially in an era of tight budgets. Citizens and corporations receiving public benefits have responsibilities to the taxpayers who confer them—from students' repaying loans to corporations' commitment not to flee suddenly the community that provided inducements to invest there.

Ultimately, a strong democracy is a primary value because, without it, powerful interests can stymie the national interest and overwhelm all other values. Without PAC reform, for example, we should not be surprised that military contractors continue to dominate the defense budget process and that a single Stealth bomber costs more than providing prenatal care for all pregnant women in poverty.

Demand-Side Growth. While supply-side conservatives want to bribe owners with incentives to produce, demand-side progressives want to spur economic growth by providing workers with an adequate income to signal producers where to invest. It's the difference between trickle-down and trickle-up economics.

We are all familiar with the supply-side theory, pioneered by Andrew Mellon in the 1920s and popularized by the Reagan Administration. In an update of Say's Law—that supply creates its own demand—Reaganites concluded that the best way to produce sustained growth was to concentrate on stimulating well-off investors to save, invest and produce more. This emphasis, however, conveniently led to a flood of corporate giveaways and upscale tax breaks.

The results? Savings and investment *fell* after enactment of Reagan's tax and budget programs in 1981, and the distribution-of-wealth gap predictably widened. The planned, massive redistribution from labor to capital produced the greatest disparity between the wealthiest fifth and poorest fifth of American families in forty years, as $9.50 in income was added at the top for every $1 lost at the bottom. While the average American worker earned $281 a week in 1983, he or she earned only $276 a week (in constant dollars) by 1988.

This policy failure, however, was accompanied by a political success. George Bush won the economic argument of 1988 by citing the Administration's sixty-nine consecutive months of sustained growth and by attacking "the failed policies of the past" (*aka* Carter-Mondale). This is triply ironic. First, economic growth under Democratic Administrations over the past half-century has been *six times* greater than under Republican Administrations. Second, the reason for the continuous growth under Reagan and Bush was hyper-Keynesian deficit spending (financed from abroad) that Reagan had denounced in 1980 as inflationary. And now, Reagan blames "big liberal spenders" for the deficits that created the borrowed prosperity that he and his successor brag about! (But for the intellectual dishonesty, you almost have to admire their argument for its audacity.)

Compounding supply-side's failures, however, is its 1990s descendant: austerity. Precisely because of Reagan's legacy of debt, many in the business community urge slashing wages, consumer spending and Federal entitlements in order to reduce the deficit and encourage capital formation. Which brings to mind Oscar Wilde's observation, "Nothing succeeds like excess." Why further squeeze the middle class to further enrich an economic elite that previously simply pocketed, rather than invested, its tax cuts?

It's foolish to believe we can impoverish ourselves into prosperity. If the goal is to keep our wages "competitive," do we keep depressing them to the level of Korea's, or Sri Lanka's? The austerity school followers would so reduce individual and Federal spending as to risk the kind of severe recession certain to depress the very savings they seek.

What we need is demand-side growth. If average Americans have an adequate wage, their spending will create markets for manufacturers to supply. Keynes once wrote about the Depression's lack of consumer demand, "The patient does not need rest, the patient needs exercise!" He understood that owners and managers won't build a factory unless there are consumers who want its product, regardless of how much idle capital is around. Say's Law should have been discredited during the Depression, when there was supply without demand. Instead, demand-side law assumes that demand creates supply and that there's no fixed tradeoff between spending and saving. More consumer and government spending can spur *more*, not less, output, savings and jobs. The risk of added inflation today appears modest due to world surpluses, low inflation to begin with and no recent experience with demand-pulled inflation.

How would the value of demand-side growth affect policies? In labor markets, we need a "new social contract," in Robert Kuttner's phrase, that can cheat the traditional

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tradeoff between inflation and unemployment: Labor gets secure, well-paying work and lifelong retraining while management gets a high-quality work force and labor peace. This means a liveable minimum wage, more employee participation and stock ownership, and government investment in retraining (since the private sector habitually underinvests there). The United States could look to Sweden, which prefers to subsidize re-employment rather than unemployment: While 80 percent of our labor market outlays go to unemployment compensation and 20 percent to retraining, in Sweden the ratio is reversed.

In fiscal policy, we should stop being obsessed with our budget deficit as the only economic enemy. The deficit should be reduced *gradually* but not so precipitously as to trigger a recession. In monetary policy, lower interest rates should precede higher taxes on the top bracket, which can ease the deficit without reducing consumption and provoking a recession. In terms of Third World debt, lending nations should negotiate a write-down so that debtor nations can afford to be consumers of the lenders' exports. Americans must understand that debt and trade do not comprise a zero-sum game—we prosper when others do.

Children First. Until very recently, public policy didn't consider children to be significant. Parents raised children, not government. Indeed, when Congress began discussing child care for struggling working families in 1971, President Richard Nixon attacked and dismissed it as a version of Big Brother socialism. Yet by 1988, Vice President George Bush was campaigning for a child care tax credit because "child care is nothing short of a family necessity." Between Nixon's indifference and Bush's concern came a confluence of demographic and economic trends that elevated the issue of children, especially children in poverty.

The simultaneous increase in single-parent families and decline in real value of the minimum wage, for example, have produced a poverty rate among children (at least 20 percent) that is the highest of any industrial democracy. The 1970s and 1980s also saw an unprecedented influx into the work force of women with children—without safe, affordable, quality child care. There has been a large increase this decade in reported cases of child abuse, teen-age pregnancy and school dropouts. Because of Reagan Administration funding cuts in prenatal care and child immunization, there are more low-birth-weight babies, and the infant mortality rates among minorities in the United States exceed those of many Third World nations. Last, as American education scores and employees' skills have fallen in our world marketplace, many business groups began calling for increased spending on education.

An unusual alliance of the compassion lobby and the corporate lobby helped make the issue of children more prominent in the 1988 presidential campaign than the issue of, for example, *contra* aid.

A policy of "Children First" must be a pre-eminent social value for an obvious reason: As nonvoters and nonpurchasers, children cannot represent their own needs. Consequently, laws should have a "children's impact statement," so that legislators can anticipate how bills might help or hurt the most vulnerable among us. Second, spending on children should be considered more an investment than an expenditure. Since every $1 spent on prenatal care saves more than $3 through fewer hospitalizations of premature babies, and since early education programs now will help equip the work force of the next century, policy should be guided by the prudent ethic of "pay now or pay (more) later."

A Children First program would include universal prenatal care; parental leave; child care in the workplace; drug treatment on demand; stronger product safety regulations; expanded Head Start and Women, Infants and Children, school nutrition and student loan programs; and a higher minimum wage and earned income tax credit so that working families will not live in poverty. There can be no better pro-family policy or use of taxpayer funds than investing in the minds and bodies of children.

Post-Cold War Peace. The first obligation of government is peace—the protection of its citizens from external aggression. No society can pursue growth, equity and excellence at home if it is not free from serious military threat.

America's postwar foreign policy has largely brought us peace, but at the cost of an immensely expensive arms race and the risk of nuclear incineration. Now, however, a once-in-a-lifetime development is under way that could diminish this cost and risk: The cold war—the central fact of the postwar era—is probably defunct. Mikhail Gorbachev's U.N. speech and internal reforms clearly distinguish him from his predecessors who indolently allowed their country to stagnate from a lack of political and economic freedoms.

But what should the U.S. response be? To date, American leaders have largely been spectators without a strategy. President Reagan deserves praise for finally appreciating the need to trade proposals rather than insults. But there's still no consensual answer to the following obvious question, posed by *The New York Times*: "If Mikhail Gorbachev succeeds in reforming the Soviet economy, will Moscow pose more or less of a threat to Western security?"

Isn't the answer less? A Soviet Union that evolves from a military economy to a civilian one, allows for more pluralism and markets, increasingly (though slowly) frees refuseniks, renounces world expansionism and advocates nuclear reductions is good for the United States. In an era of nuclear parity, in which more nuclear weapons do not pur-

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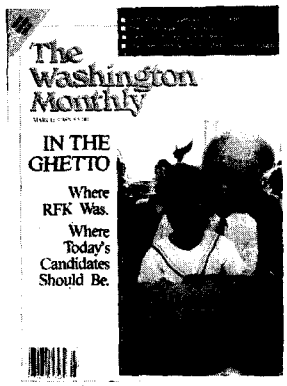

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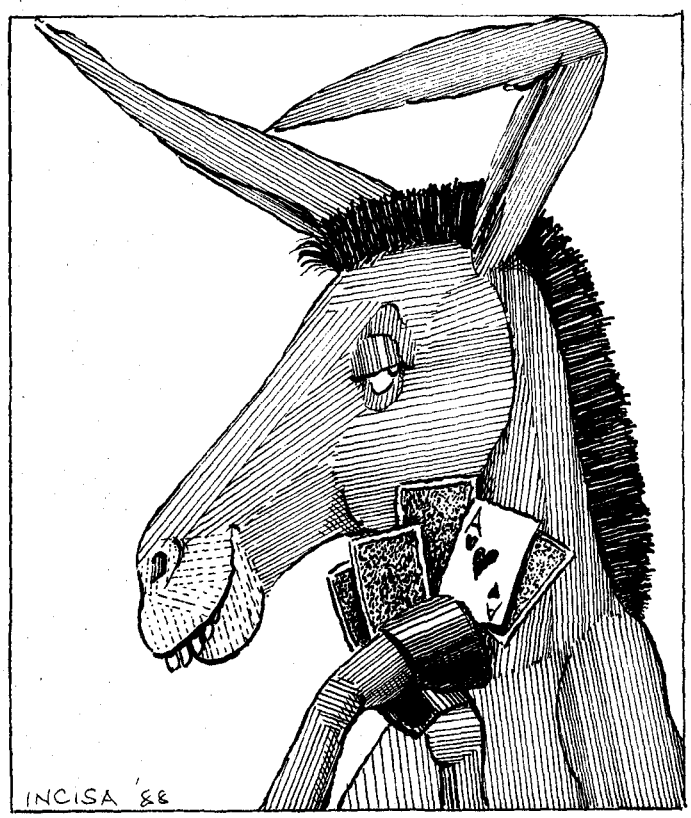
chase more safety and in which one reason we survive today is that the Russians chose not to launch any of their 25,000 nuclear weapons, the only enduring way to peace is to reduce tensions through negotiations.

That means that, as Stephen F. Cohen has argued, we must meet Gorbachev halfway. How long can he make concessions without responses? Unless he can demonstrate real gains to *his* hard-liners—say, American arms reductions to match the Soviet Union's or Western loans at market rates for domestic investment—Gorbachev may fail and be succeeded by a traditional cold warrior.

So while the value of peace required the "containment" of Stalin's Soviet Union at the height of the cold war, today the same value requires a shift from containment to cooperation—because it's in *our* national interest. The United States must continue to be skeptical and vigilant, but also should show its own "new thinking" to seize an opportunity that could produce huge dividends in three areas: the reduction of nuclear arms, conventional arms and regional conflict.

In nuclear arms, the new President and Congress should pursue the promising initiatives begun at the Reagan-Gorbachev summits. Unlike all prior weapons in history, nuclear arms exist to deter and not be used; each side, consequently, must avoid destabilizing weapons—those capable of launching a first strike and "winning" a nuclear exchange—since those may provoke a pre-emptive attack. Also, it's time to use the bargaining chip called the Strategic Defense Initiative to obtain a great compromise: that both sides slash their ballistic weapons to below the number that would trigger a "nuclear winter," and both confine any strategic defense systems to the laboratory. Last, the world will be safer with a comprehensive test ban treaty. If John Kennedy had persuaded his Pentagon to accept the treaty he desired, rather than only the limited test ban, today there would be no hydra-headed MIRVs (multiple independent re-entry vehicles) and no undetectable nuclear-tipped cruise missiles.



In conventional arms, in the early 1960s, the Pentagon budget was based on America's ability to fight two large wars and one small war at the same time. But Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird changed a two-and-a-half-war strategy to a one-and-a-half-war strategy after the "Chinese threat" effectively disappeared. The next defense secretary should pursue similar savings if the Russians join the Chinese as a former obsession.

The most obvious place to start would be Western Europe, where the United States spends 60 percent of its defense budget defending NATO. Following up on Gorbachev's dramatic U.N. announcement about unilateral Soviet troop reductions, after inauguration President Bush could match or top the General Secretary in advancing a post-cold war peace. The United States should at least agree to a "defensive defense" strategy whereby both sides would be strong enough to repel an attack though not to launch one. Or Bush could make a bold, historic counterproposal that would establish him as a world leader for peace: a complete, mutual withdrawal of all superpower troops from Eastern and Western Europe.

In regional conflicts, both superpowers have expensively learned that there are limits to their power to dominate Third World events and countries, especially after Vietnam and Afghanistan. In the 1990s, let's test Gorbachev's assertion that there is no longer a military solution to any of the great political conflicts around the world. Already, several regional conflicts are being resolved—the Iran-Iraq war, Mozambique, Namibia, Angola. If U.S.-Soviet relations continue to warm, it should not be inconceivable to attempt understandings about such hot spots as Nicaragua, South Africa, the Middle East and Cuba. Beyond discussing such difficult regional conflicts, the United States should aggressively challenge the Soviet Union—with whom we once cooperated to win a world war—to cooperate in addressing such common problems as world hunger, nuclear proliferation, environmental hazards, terrorism and AIDS.

Respect for Law. Throughout our history, Americans and America's leaders have displayed a special fidelity to law and ethics. If anything, our Revolution militantly rejected arbitrary government and embraced the principle that no person is above the law. Recall that the late Senator Paul Douglas would return every gift sent him worth more than $5. And recall that Dwight Eisenhower vetoed a natural gas deregulation bill that he avidly supported because a natural gas lobbyist had tried to bribe a New Jersey senator before final passage.

It's a sharp drop from Ike and Douglas to Edwin Meese 3d, Michael Deaver, Lyn Nofziger, Robert McFarlane, Rita Lavelle and Paul Thayer—not to mention Oliver North and dozens of lesser-knowns who feathered their nests at taxpayer expense and who seemed to take literally their constitutional oath to "*execute* the laws faithfully." "For God's sake," said Elliot Richardson, four times a Republican Cabinet secretary, "are we not entitled to hope that

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the next Administration will be a little less sleazy?"

A new Administration and Congress have the opportunity to spotlight again the value of law. First, once in office President Bush should nominate, and the Senate confirm, only people who will pledge allegiance to public service and ethics. People such as F.D.R.'s Francis Perkins and Truman's George Marshall and Kennedy's Stewart Udall and L.B.J.'s John Gardner and Ford's Edward Levi and Carter's Cyrus Vance, who were more interested in making history than money. Second, above all other positions, the Attorney General and each Federal judge should be "a meet person, learned in the law" (Judiciary Act of 1789) and not merely a Daniel Manion who passes a reactionary saliva test. Third, the installed Bush should sign the ethics bill his predecessor vetoed, a bill to discourage executive and Congressional branch members from cashing in on their public office. And he should make clear that any appointee who failed faithfully to comply with the law's letter and spirit would be out on his or her ear the next day.

Without respect for law and ethics, the necessary bond of trust between the governed and their governors may break.

The performance of incoming Presidents is invariably measured against F.D.R.'s first hundred days, when the greatest domestic crisis of the century and an overwhelmingly Democratic Congress gave Roosevelt carte blanche to fight the Depression. In 1989, however, such a benchmark artificially constrains the real transition challenge for the United States. The prospects and problems are simply too long-term to fit into such neat journalistic boxes as First Hundred Days.

Indeed, dropout rates of 50 percent in our central cities, $150 billion annual budget and trade debts and a depleted ozone layer took decades to develop; their solutions may take no less. Some of the most significant public policy reforms of the last half century, such as the Public Utility Holding Company Act, school desegregation, Federal securities laws and automobile safety standards all took a decade or two of great effort by committed advocates before they became a reality. As Justice Arthur Vanderbilt of the New Jersey Supreme Court once wrote, "Reform is not for the short-winded."

The time to begin a campaign for progressive change is with Bush's inauguration—indeed because of it. No political philosophy worth its precepts should default because of a defeat, or defeats. After eight years of conservative Republican indictments, deceits, deficits, drugs and poverty, why should progressive Democrats be in any way apologetic? Because Dukakis flopped in the second debate and forgot to respond to the slandering of the liberal tradition? Instead, progressive Democrats need to advertise unapologetically their winning values in order to co-govern and to provide a foundation for this decade of transition.

So don't listen to Lee Atwater, now of the Republican National Committee, or Al From, of the Democratic Leadership Council. The progressive mainstream has a potent message, even if it currently lacks a presidential messenger. □

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The Bard of Red Dog

FREDRIC PAUL SMOLER

HIGHBROW/LOWBROW: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America. *By Lawrence W. Levine. Harvard University Press. 306 pp. $25.*

The anticanonicals who want to chuck "the dead white boys" out of the college curriculum turn out to have a few things in common with Allan Bloom, that most conspicuous defender of high culture as the preserve of the few. For one thing, they share a couple of misconceptions about the hoi polloi—*aka* the working, lower, popular or artisanal classes; the populace, the plebeians (*arch.*), the proletariat (*obs.*) and The People. In his remarkably interesting *Highbrow/Lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America*, historian Lawrence W. Levine has demonstrated that for most of the nineteenth century the dead white boys *were* the popular culture.

The first third of *Highbrow/Lowbrow* is a fascinating essay on the performance history of the Shakespearean canon in the United States. Between 1800 and 1835 Philadelphians had the opportunity to see twenty-one of the thirty-seven plays. This was not a freak theatrical taste; from 1800 through 1840 the Bard was the most popular playwright in Louisville, Cincinnati, St. Louis, Detroit and Lexington, Kentucky. From 1849 to 1859, twenty-two of the plays were performed in California, and the very greatest American and British actors performed on makeshift stages before miners in Tod's Valley, Chip's Flat, Cherokee Flat, Mud Springs, Red Dog, Hangtown, Drytown and Fiddletown. In Kentucky *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Othello* and *The Merchant of Venice* were performed on the second floor of an old brewery, and contemporary newspapers record that Shakespeare was the favorite playwright of the New Orleans black working class.

In the cities of the Eastern Seaboard in the mid-nineteenth century, one-fifth of all plays offered in the course of a given season were Shakespeare's; after the Civil War, returning American diplomats noted that the Bard was far more popular in this country than he was in England. In 1882 the German traveler Karl Knortz observed that every log cabin in the Far West contained a Bible, and that most of them were furnished with a cheap edition of the works of Shakespeare.

Were the texts as widely known as the performance history suggests? Parody presumes familiarity, and the plays were familiar enough to be frequently and elaborately parodied. Levine's research demonstrates that Twain's clowning in *Huckleberry Finn* was only the tip of the iceberg. In a Southern parody of *Othello*, Othello and Desdemona sang a duet, "Dey say in de dark all cullers am de same." *Richard III*, the most popular play in the United States of the nineteenth century, was frequently lampooned in such versions as *Bad Dicky*. In New York City the British comedian Charles Matthews visited what he called "the Nigger's (or Negroe's) theatre," where he heard "a black tragedian recite 'to be or not to be? That is the question: whether it is nobler in de mind to suffer, or tak' up arms against a sea of trouble, an by *opposum* end 'em.'" "No sooner was the word opossum out of his mouth," Matthews reported, "than the audience burst forth in one general cry, 'Opossum, Opossum, Opossum,'" whereupon the actor came forward and sang a popular song. White audiences responded similarly to puns, parodists and other provocations, and their responses could trigger impromptu alterations in the text. Audiences were generally alert to potential topical allusions. During the wars of the French Revolution, the overly emphatic delivery of a line from *Henry V* was interpreted as anti-Jacobin propaganda and hissed down by a pro-French crowd, which was only placated when the offending actor sang a patriotic song.

It was by no means uncommon for audiences to comment on the action, and they would on rare occasions wander onto the stage and examine the scenery and props. The evidence suggests that they were variously amused, exhilarated, moved and instructed by Shakespearean drama. They do not appear to have been intimidated by it, and seem to have been bored only by what they considered defects of thespian craft. A nineteenth-century diarist noted that "the egg as a vehicle of dramatic criticism came into early use in this Continent," which rather understates the case; a Sacramento audience initially took exception to Hugh F. MacDermott's depiction of Richard III with carrots "timidly thrown," followed by cabbages, more carrots, pumpkins, a wreath of vegetables, a sack of flour and one of soot, and a dead goose, along with what the local paper termed "other articles." Chinese firecrackers were employed in Act II, but it took a direct hit by a pumpkin and a subsequent beaning with a potato to finally drive the doughty MacDermott from the stage.

According to Levine, the business of separating ordinary Americans from Shakespeare was long and cumbersome. For the first half of the century the canonical play was usually followed by a contemporary farce, and the whole evening consisted of an extraordinary variety of entertainments. First the habit of presenting Shakespearean drama on a mixed bill of fare came under attack, then the performance of Shakespeare in the same theater that housed musical comedy began to seem vulgar. Some theaters became "legitimate," and working class audiences avoided them. Performance styles became class-specific, as did audience protocol, and Shakespeare was finally deemed "unsuitable" for a mass audience: too complicated, too serious and too demanding. Immigration produced a working class unable to follow a complicated English-language text. In the end, the middle class became paralyzed by its own invention—Shakespeare-as-classic—and persuaded itself that its members too were unable to understand the Bard without the mediation of a specialized education, an annotated text and instruction by professional and eventually highly academic critics.

Levine's account here raises more questions than it answers—it is not clear why entrepreneurs did not continue to service an existing English-speaking, working-class taste—and it does not explain the presence of some and the absence of other attempts at Shakespeare in translation. (My father can quote extensively from *Shylock's Daughter*, the Yiddish version of *The Merchant of Venice* in which he first saw the play performed; my grandfather quoted *King Lear* in Russian, the language in which he and his friends had first read it.) Still, the foregoing suggests that no genre, tradi-

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tion or practice has a fixed position in an elite or popular culture. There are no clearly defined cultures, only art (and other practices) enjoyed by different social classes at various moments, and that is a very different thing.

If Levine had restricted himself to the history of Shakespeare in the United States, we would owe him considerable gratitude, for the subject is fascinating and ought to inform current debates on the nature and transformation of a literary canon. As it is, we owe him more, for *Highbrow/Lowbrow* traces a similar history with operatic and, to a lesser degree, symphonic music, once the stuff of ordinary mass entertainment but now something only the aging and the formally educated are presumed to enjoy.

As in contemporary productions of Shakespeare, the nineteenth-century audience might demand the repetition of a particularly admired or well-received musical passage. It is particularly interesting to learn that many nineteenth-century composers left spaces in an operatic score for the insertion of what can only be called current pop tunes, which suggests that opera was not a uniquely "high" art even to its creators, let alone its listeners. In the case of orchestras, the distinction between audience and performers was blurred by the tendency to rely partly on local amateurs, who might rejoin the audience after their talents were no longer required. The Shakespeare story more or less repeats itself: The mixed bills disappeared, separate houses were constructed, an unpleasant fate awaited the boisterous pan-class audience and a worse one the performers. The former was fragmented, with the bulk made to feel unwelcome and the remainder disciplined; the latter were subjected to increasingly authoritarian control by the conductors. The new high culture could not draw an audience to support its performance, thus giving over control to wealthy patrons. Levine extends the argument, with considerable modification, to include museums. I do not find these arguments entirely persuasive.

At times this is an exasperating book. Levine places excessive confidence in the role of elites in what he calls the "sacralization of culture." His suggestions about the meaning of his audiences' readings of Shakespeare are curiously timid and bland. In his preface, Levine confesses to wondering whether Shakespeare, the proper business of those brainy fellows over in Eng Lit, is beyond the ken of a professional historian. If he feels this way, I wonder how rich and complicated an interpretation he imagines the Virginia City miners achieved. This, after all, is what we want to know: What did the inhabitants of the common culture see? What range of readings were they likely to have made? When Levine complains about the assumption that the pan-class audience must have liked Shakespeare for "the wrong reasons," methinks he doth protest too much. That is the sort of allusion I remember my uncles making. English was not their first language, and one of them missed college, but I suspect that they perfectly understood the phrase in its original context, and I would like to think that native speakers would have grasped far more complex verbal constructions.

Levine's modesty about the audience's achievements extends to the plays themselves. Having proven that Shakespeare (and Mozart, Wagner and Rossini, etc., along with a host of ancient sculptors) were part of a nineteenth-century American's mental furniture, Levine refrains from suggesting that such a mind was any more richly caparisoned than one stocked solely with muzak and Silhouette romances. This is not to suggest that Sil-

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houette romances defile any mind they touch (I vividly remember a Shakespeare-loving woman who happily edited them), but that Shakespeare is, well, *better*.

There, I've said it. I suspect that Levine has learned a dreadful coyness from those brainy people over in Eng Lit. They won't say that Shakespeare is *better*. In the Bizarro World the Eng Lit boys and girls live in, that's the sort of thing a professor just doesn't do. From Levine's account of the vanished pan-class audience, it is by no means clear that *it* would have refused to say the B-word. That audience serially enjoyed many kinds of art, varieties we now call high as well as those we think of as so low we no longer call them art at all—prestidigitation involving playing cards and a hot leg of mutton, for example. And although the audience liked the latter trick (it was featured on the bill in prominent type), there is some evidence that it thought the Shakespeare was, in its way, rather better. But it was, likely as not, just a bunch of miners, who didn't have the advantage of a college education. □

A New American Voice

ROBERT McPHILLIPS

THE DIRECTION OF POETRY: An Anthology of Rhymed and Metered Verse Written in the English Language Since 1975. *Edited and With an Introduction by Robert Richman. Houghton Mifflin. $19.95. Paper $12.95.*

Surely the most interesting development on the poetry scene during the last few years has been the renewed interest in poetic form. Indeed, no other subject is more likely to arouse a heated debate among contemporary poets. Since World War II, American poetry has diverged roughly into two paths. One of these, long connected with the academy because of its alliance with the New Criticism, has been characterized by highly urbane, ironic and consciously crafted formal poems. This poetry—which emerged after the war in the work of Anthony Hecht, John Hollander, Robert Lowell, James Merrill, Howard Nemerov, Adrienne Rich and Richard Wilbur among others—has customarily reflected a cosmopolitan stance and a desire for classic permanence. The other path, that of the so-called free verse revolution, scorned the highbrow pretensions of "academic" formalist poets and chose as its muses such distinctly American figures as Walt Whitman and William Carlos Williams—determined, in Williams's phrase, to "break the iambic pentameter line" and forge, in the process, a "new American voice." Both groups, in effect, were publicly legitimized by anthologies. The former group received its official identity with the publication of *The New Poets of England and America* (1957), edited by Donald Hall, Robert Pack and Louis Simpson; the latter was announced by Donald Allen's *The New American Poetry* (1960).

It was the latter group, however, whose members included the Beat, Black Mountain and New York School poets—figures such as Allen Ginsberg, Denise Levertov, Charles Olson and John Ashbery—who in combination later with the Deep Image poets such as Robert Bly, W.S. Merwin and Mark Strand were to prove much more influential throughout the 1960s and much of the 1970s. (Ironically, one outgrowth of this influence has been the institutionalization of the writing workshop in American colleges and universities.) The triumph of the free verse aesthetic among younger poets who came of age in the 1960s and early 1970s has also been solidified by such volumes as Ron Padgett and David Shapiro's *An Anthology of New York Poets* (1970) and Daniel Halpern's *The American Poetry Anthology* (1975), a gathering of over 300 poems by seventy-six younger poets. These volumes emphasized the idea that poets, in discovering their own voices, must create their own idiosyncratic forms as well.

During the past decade there has been an interesting and unanticipated dialectical shift among younger poets. The recent publication of such anthologies as Philip Dacey and David Jauss's *Strong Measures: Contemporary American Poetry in Traditional Forms* (1985) and David Lehman's *Ecstatic Occasions, Expedient Forms* (1987) attests to a revived interest in fixed form. Both of these volumes, however, were flawed. The former, as Robert Richman points out in his introduction to *The Direction of Poetry*, is largely made up of poems that allude, like Robert Lowell's late informal "sonnets," to traditional forms without fully committing themselves to the rigors of strict metrical or rhyme patterns. Lehman's anthology, which gathers sixty-five poems together with essays on them by the poets, attests, with a few notable exceptions, to the contemporary poet's lack of a coherent critical terminology. *The Direction of Poetry* is a significant book because it is the first explicitly to limit its scope to poems of the last decade or so written in rhyme and meter. Further, its editor is bold enough to assert that, while deliberately restrictive in its aesthetic scope, the volume represents the best poetry in English since 1975.

Richman's volume does much to back up that provocative claim. Slender as it is (it contains no more than three poems by any one poet), the anthology attempts to map what until recently has been the uncharted tradition of contemporary formal verse. One reads with an exhilarating sense of discovery.

Richman's guiding principle that aesthetic judgments based on interest in "narration, characterization, and, perhaps most significantly, musicality" precede any other considerations has, among its other assets, the virtue of rejecting the by now invidious distinction between American and British poetry. (For too long poetry that does not challenge the "iambic pentameter line" in search of the "new American voice" has been automatically dismissed as reactionary and unimportant.) Hence, in addition to such poets as Donald Davie, Geoffrey Hill, Seamus Heaney and Charles Tomlinson, among the few British and Irish poets with an American following, it is refreshing to find such lesser-known but equally engaging British poets as Fleur Adcock, Douglas Dunn, James Fenton, Tony Harrison, Anne Stevenson and Carol Rumens.

But Richman also challenges the accepted canon of contemporary American poetry in his juxtaposition of older poets—who have been overshadowed in the past two decades by their free verse contemporaries—with a number of younger poets who, in his opinion, now represent "the direction of poetry." Surely his alternative canon is not definitive. Among older poets not represented here, two in particular—John Ashbery and Adrienne Rich—seem likely to last. Still Richman's group of formal poets is impressive. The inclusion of two masterpieces from Elizabeth Bishop's last book, *Geography III*, reminds us of this

Robert McPhillips writes about contemporary literature for Prairie Schooner, Sewanee Review *and other publications.*

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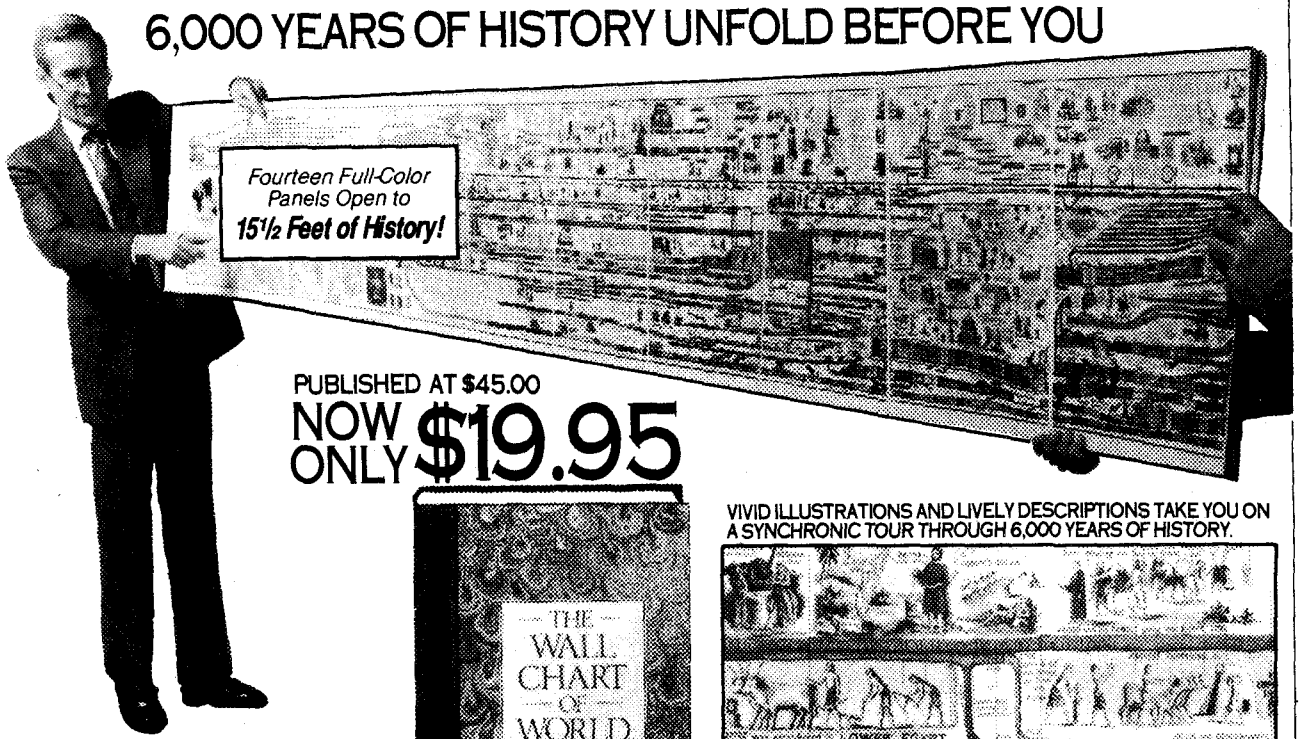

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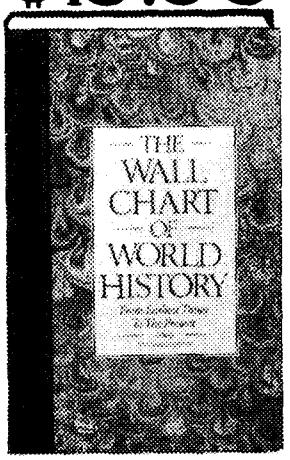

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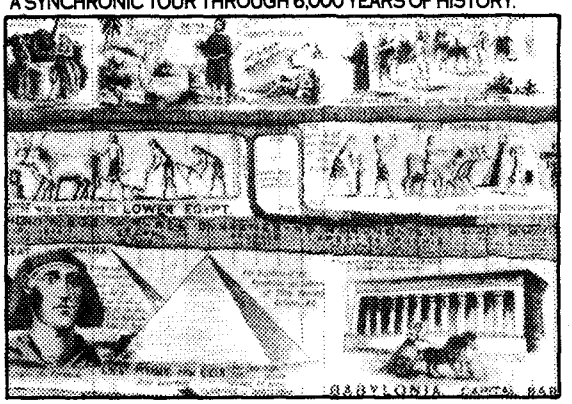

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poet's enduring strengths. "The Moose" displays Bishop's ability to move from the minute description of seemingly prosaic scenes and objects to unexpected moments of luminosity, and "One Art" perfectly aligns her mastery of the villanelle with the more difficult art of mastering loss. The latter's final quatrain so exquisitely balances formal with emotional control as to leave one breathless:

> —Even losing you (the joking voice, a gesture
> I love) I shan't have lied. It's evident
> the art of losing's not too hard to master
> though it may look like (*Write* it!) like disaster.

Powerful too is the elegy by Frederick Morgan, "February 11, 1977," on the suicide of one of his sons, and that by X.J. Kennedy, "Terse Elegy for J.V. Cunningham." James Merrill is also well represented in a playfully appealing meditation on form and forgetting, "Losing the Marbles." But perhaps the older poet whose status this anthology most clearly establishes is Donald Justice. Richman chose three of his poems, including "In Memory of the Unknown Poet, Robert Broadman Vaughn," another stunning villanelle that builds to a memorable and melodic final quatrain:

> All done now. But I remember the fiery
> Hypnotic eye and the raised voice blazing with poetry.
> It was his story and would always be his story—
> The boredom, and the horror, and the glory.

The legacy of these poets is evident in the work of the younger generation represented here, and it is to these younger poets, of course, that one must look to test Richman's assertion that meter and rhyme represent "the direction of poetry" as the century approaches its final decade. To be sure, not all of them—including, ironically, some of the most honored and well known—are as good as Richman claims. But the weaker ones are far outweighed by the work of poets such as Dana Gioia, Mary Jo Salter, Gjertrud Schnackenberg, Elizabeth Spires and Timothy Steele. These poets use meter and rhyme in a far less mannered, less witty and ironic way than the academic formalists of the 1950s. They employ it to give clarity and musicality to their perceptions, which are generally presented in a plain, colloquial style. Certainly they aspire to a more direct and human eloquence rather than to the distanced erudition of Hecht, Hollander, Nemerov and even Wilbur.

One evident outgrowth of this new formalism is the revival of the intimate yet classically restrained love poem. Among the best of these is Katha Pollitt's sonnet "Two Fish," which successfully resolves, in its final Shakespearean couplet, the tension created when a pool of water that has offered an ideal "image of love" in "those speckled trout" is later encountered as "heat-choked and fevered." "But doubtless you," the speaker asserts to her lover, "prefer to think our trout had left together/to seek a place with less inclement weather." Equally impressive are Timothy Steele's graceful *aubade* "Aurora" and Elizabeth Spires's "Two Shadows," addressed to her husband:

> When we are shadows watching over shadows,
> we will not speak of it but *know*, and turn
> again toward each other tenderly,
> shadow to shadow.

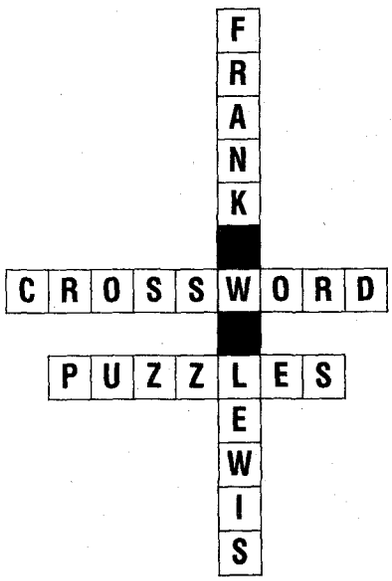
Gjertrud Schnackenberg and Dana Gioia are two of the most impressive younger formal poets to have emerged in the past decade. Schnackenberg's "Supernatural Love" is an unquestionably superb poem, a tour de force that seamlessly weaves, in tercets, the poet's recurrent theme of her love for her late father, with a scene of her own poetic precociousness. Successful as this poem is, its self-conscious concern with poetic language sets it apart from the more direct and equally accomplished elegies to her father from her first collection, *Portraits and Elegies*. Richman's failure to include one of these earlier poems is particularly inexcusable in light of his inclusion of an adequate but inferior elegy from Melissa Green's *The Squanicook Eclogues*, a volume clearly derivative, in theme and structure, from Schnackenberg's *Portraits*.

Like Schnackenberg, Dana Gioia is represented by one of his strongest poems, "California Hills in August," an elegiac evocation of a seemingly "unbearable" landscape "August has already drained of green" that is ultimately perceived as "gentle . . . to someone," like the poet, "raised in a landscape short of rain." Gioia's second poem in the anthology, "The Next Poem," could easily serve as a poetics for the ideal New Formalist poem, presenting

> No jumble of imagery
> dumped glumly in the reader's lap
> or elegantly packaged junk
> the unsuspecting must unwrap,
> But words that could direct a friend
> precisely to an unknown place,
> those few unshakeable details
> no confusion can erase.

As grateful as one is for its inclusion, one can't help thinking that poet and reader would be better served by examples of Gioia's more intimate poetry—"Cruising With the Beach Boys" or "Parts of Summer Weather"—poems that embody rather than meditate upon poetic virtues.

These shortcomings in Richman's choices point up general if modest weaknesses in the anthology as a whole: the selections from the best poets here are too few to be fully representative, and too many of the poems are about *poetry*. The editor seems caught between his proclaimed agenda to choose poems that are "a source of pleasure" and a more hidden one to create an anthology that doubles as a self-reflexive poetics. Nevertheless, *The Direction of Poetry* remains an extremely important volume, one that is likely to engender controversy. It presents the radical notion that poetry's return to "tradition"—to rhyme and meter—is, at present, the most fertile way to "make it new." □



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New York Dreaming

ELIZABETH BLACKMAR

THE CITY THAT NEVER WAS: Two Hundred Years of Fantastic and Fascinating Plans That Might Have Changed the Face of New York City. *By Rebecca Read Shanor. Viking. 256 pp. $35.*

Imagine an underground moving platform carrying pedestrians across Manhattan at 34th Street. Imagine Roosevelt Island landscaped into a Tivoli pleasure garden, or the United Nations meeting in Flushing Meadows. Imagine Central Park's Great Lawn transformed into an elaborate arched monument with cascading fountains spilling into a lagoon and with an open-air Temple of Music seating 20,000 at its southern end. Imagine a forty-story skyscraper cathedral with a seventy-five-foot revolving electric cross shooting red and orange rays into the atmosphere. Imagine a Cross-Bronx Expressway running from SoHo through the Lower East Side.

In *The City That Never Was*, Rebecca Read Shanor helps us visualize a very different New York City landscape by assembling an array of proposals that went awry. Shanor has selected "fantastic and fascinating" schemes for street plans, public buildings, transportation systems, bridges, parks and monuments, researching the occasions for these designs being put forth and the reasons for their failures. The richly illustrated and lively stories—some of them familiar, many of them fresh—will be picked up and retold by New Yorkers who have, after all, shown an affinity for legends about alligators in their sewers.

Shanor's narratives contribute less to our understanding of the city's history than to our appreciation of its folklore. She sketches the trials of everyday city life that inspired new ideas, from the 1871 distemper epidemic, which brought horse railways to a halt and encouraged new interest in steam (or pneumatically powered) transportation, to the 42nd Street shuttle, which "became a favorite do-it-yourself project for fed-up commuters, who mentally redesigned the cross-town line on their way to and from work." Colorful characters—scheming politicians, ambitious engineers, lunatic visionaries, arrogant officials, farsighted civic benefactors and, of course, profit-hungry developers—march across the city's historical terrain seeking wealth, glory and public order. But the stories also have morals that marshal our judgments as to what is happening in the city today.

Some stories play into a jaded sophistication that knows that money and politics determine what does and does not get built in New York. We are not surprised to learn that the entrenched interests of nineteenth-century street railways and Broadway proprietors—in cahoots with sympathetic and well-paid politicians—blocked public transportation innovations for more than thirty years. And we watch knowingly as "heroic" efforts to span the Hudson River founder on the shifting calculations of railroad companies and government officials. Such stories provide a long tradition in which to situate the business alliances and priorities of the Koch, Cuomo and Reagan administrations, although today we tend to worry more about bridges falling down than their going up.

Other stories appeal to New Yorkers' ambivalent awe and anger at the power of money in our city. The United Nations was built on the old slaughterhouse sites because John D. Rockefeller Jr. used his personal wealth to make the international organization an offer its delegates couldn't refuse; in doing so, he also bailed William Zeckendorf Sr. out of a real estate scheme that had gone sour. The 1929 crash brought down the plan for Broadway Temple's skyscraper cathedral, seemingly rebuking the sacrilege of its unabashed identification with mammon and the entertainments of the 1920s.

The 1904 scheme of the Municipal Art Society for broad avenues bisecting (and clearing) lower Manhattan reinforces our suspicion that planners and design "experts" are not to be trusted, particularly when they weigh monumental order and efficiency against the values and scale of neighborhood life. With admirable restraint, Shanor limits Robert Moses to only two failed schemes—the Lower Manhattan Expressway and the Battery-Brooklyn Bridge—both of which were blocked when widespread protest intersected with political party infighting. One reason Moses may not claim more space in a book like this is that he so often succeeded.

Elizabeth Blackmar teaches American history at Columbia University. Her book Manhattan for Rent, 1785–1850 *will be published this spring by Cornell University Press.*

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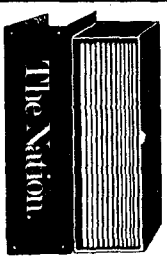

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Some novel suggestions came from well-intentioned naifs and eccentrics unequal to the power brokers' deals or outclassed by designers who traveled in the right circles and shared the dominant aesthetic values of their time. Neither the truly fantastic proposal of a series of caves with allegorical statues at the entrance of the Natural History Museum nor Lucia Willoughby's plan for a Times Square World War II victory arch "with two gargantuan palm leaves" springing out of a thirty-foot pedestal progressed far. The moral given to these design stories—as becomes clear also in Shanor's uncritical presentation of alternative proposals for Central Park—is as much about the triumph of good taste as about the workings of power.

At their best, works like *The City That Never Was* remind people in a nondidactic way that the shape of the city is not predetermined, that there have always been conflicts, alternatives, other possibilities. Such narratives allow New Yorkers to claim and explain their own landscape, to identify with its history, to interpret and embellish its dynamic past. Yet these stories also construct a received wisdom about what is desirable and what is undesirable in the design of public space.

In joining folklore to a genre in architectural literature that has become popular in the past twenty years—the documentation of unbuilt and torn-down ("lost") America—Shanor shares that genre's underlying preservationist sensibility. She gives particular dramatic weight to the 1960 fight to save Carnegie Hall, reminds us that the Landmarks Preservation Commission rose out of the rubble of Penn Station in 1965, and stresses the protection of SoHo as the outcome of the thirty-year battle to block Moses' Lower Manhattan Expressway plans.

If there is a political moral to Shanor's stories, it lies in her advocacy of New Yorkers' collective and vested rights in the material artifacts of the city's past. Shanor is not mired in nostalgia; her judgments are grounded in appreciation for the human scale of a livable city. But like so many preservationists, her own standards of taste keep her from inquiring too closely into how the city looks and works from other points of view, or how the fashions of architectural judgment—including our contemporary rejection of monumental planning and modernism—close down other ways of organizing and using city space.

Much of the case for preserving particular slices of the city landscape rests on the assertion of the social and political neutrality of aesthetic values. Such claims of civic disinterestedness and *cultural* authority support preservationists' simultaneous challenge to an unrestrained profit motive and indifference to the restricted social benefits of their own advocacy. The danger of the preservationist sensibility, as seems so clear with the displacement that accompanies the restoration of "architectural gems," is that buildings come to matter more than people. Like the supporters of no-growth movements, those who celebrate people's shared rights in their community's past, including its buildings and open spaces, often avoid the harder questions of people's rights in the city's future. We laugh at "fantastic" alternatives from the past in part because we have grown skeptical that the city could ever be built to be more habitable for all of its residents, not just those who appreciate fine acoustics, cast-iron facades or scenic vistas. For all Shanor's awareness of the divided and diverse interests at play in the building of a "public" landscape, her stories of parks and public monuments accept uncritically the construct of a unified and unitary public good.

One of the more thought-provoking sections of the book is Shanor's discussion of efforts to construct a Holocaust memorial. How should such an event be enshrined? In Europe, the camps themselves teach their history. Members of a 1966 committee directed Louis Kahn to create a monument that would "reflect and evoke the emotional, psychological, and historical impact of the tragedy of the period." The Art Commission rejected two earlier proposals: a figure engulfed in thorns and flames was found to be "of such distressing and horrifying significance" that it would frighten children, and a twenty-six-foot-high Torah scroll with bas-relief depictions of Holocaust scenes was considered too large and graphic. Shanor regrets that members of the memorial committee also rejected Kahn's glass cubes monument for being too abstract or too hopeful, and expresses satisfaction that elements of Kahn's design reappear in the city's Vietnam Veterans Memorial. But the group Vietnam Veterans Against World War III has suggested that the memorial's aesthetically moving qualities also obscure the history that it monumentalizes, and that it places the war beyond politics and teaches no moral other than tragic personal loss.

Such differences in interpretation are

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also an important part of the story of what does and does not get built in New York. One of the pleasures of looking at more than a century of proposals is the opportunity to reflect on what different New Yorkers may have found meaningful, beautiful or convenient in the design of public spaces, and why. Shanor gives us her judgments, but in providing the designs she also opens the way for her readers to imagine and judge alternatives for themselves. □

Sorrows of Young Ludwig

PAUL MATTICK JR.

WITTGENSTEIN: A LIFE: Young Ludwig, 1889–1921. *By Brian McGuinness. University of California Press. 322 pp. $22.50.*

In the late 1960s *Vogue* touted an unusual item in its trend-noting column: "People Are Talking About . . . Ludwig Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*." I myself remember the thrill of owning and leafing through this short book—which I certainly did not understand—as a college freshman interested in philosophy. People are still talking about the *Tractatus* (though it may have fallen somewhat out of fashion), and they talk even more about Wittgenstein's later writings, especially the *Philosophical Investigations*. The stream of academic commentary on his work is a broad one, carrying with it, lately, two novels inspired by Wittgenstein, and now the first volume of a new biography by Brian McGuinness, a translator of the *Tractatus* and professor of philosophy at Oxford University.

Young Ludwig follows its subject from his youth in Vienna, the years of study at Cambridge University and his experiences in World War I to the publication of his first book in 1921. It is based, we are told, on personal communications and unparalleled access to archives and manuscript and letter collections. It must be said at once that, with all this help and the best will in the world, McGuinness has produced a dissatisfying book. An awkward writer ("Even the piano Ludwig was taught by an unsuitable method and lessons were discontinued"), McGuinness has been ill served by his editors, who have permitted his baffling use of Austrian abbreviations and references to British academic customs. More seriously, his book will confuse rather than aid the nonspecialist reader who wishes to understand Wittgenstein's philosophical importance. Someone who does not already have a sense of the revolution wrought in logic by Gottlob Frege and Bertrand Russell will be at a loss to understand the significance of Wittgenstein's responses to their work, while the philosophically sophisticated reader will be annoyed by errors and the absence of illuminating exposition.

The reader who is interested in the story of a personality will find much to ponder here. The product of a wealthy, cultured and pathological family (three brothers committed suicide) ruled with an iron hand by a robber baron father, Wittgenstein experienced the world as filled with "vile" and "disgusting" people, not exempting himself. He told David Pinsent, the close companion of his prewar years in Cambridge, that he felt he had "no right to live in an antipathetic world . . . where he perpetually finds himself feeling contempt for others, and irritating others by his nervous temperament without some justification for that contempt etc. such as being a really great man and having done really great work." He began to think of suicide at the age of 10 or 11; a decade or so later he told Pinsent he "felt ashamed of never daring to kill himself," and in 1918 we find him "on his way to commit suicide somewhere." McGuinness cites a story of Russell's: "Once I said to him: 'Are you thinking about logic or about your sins?' 'Both,' he replied, and continued his pacing. I did not like to suggest that it was time for bed, as it seemed probable both to him and me that on leaving me he would commit suicide."

Though Wittgenstein eventually died of natural causes, he was clearly a tormented figure. His search for decency and honesty not only led him to give his entire fortune away but often took the form of browbeating others (such as the denunciation of a kind landlady who had written to him about the death of her child, for her "unnatural" and "journalistic" mode of expression, which, he replied, "caused me such repugnance and the feeling of such a difference between us that I put aside as absurd any idea of achieving an understanding with you"). Such behavior somehow contributed to

Paul Mattick Jr. teaches philosophy at Bennington College.

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the image Wittgenstein enjoyed as a near-saintly ascetic. It also helped him provoke quarrels with various father figures, notably Russell and G.E. Moore. Meanwhile, he managed to surround himself with adoring male disciples, whose opinions and even lives he controlled to a remarkable degree. While McGuinness provides us with a rich store of materials for a picture of his subject, he brings to the understanding of this tale of brilliance, misery and manipulation nothing more sophisticated than allusions to Wittgenstein's "genius" and the "high moral standards" inherited from his family (thus Wittgenstein's inability to establish good relations with the enlisted men he encountered in the army during World War I is explained by references to their "mean natures").

On the question of Wittgenstein's sexuality, long a topic of rumor and rarely of public discussion, nearly nothing direct is included beyond a footnote that says an earlier biographer's hypothesis of recurrent bouts of homosexual promiscuity is incompatible with the testimony of some of Wittgenstein's friends. We have only references to "sensuality" and Wittgenstein's struggle against it; we are told that physical labor during the war rendered him "completely a-sexual" at the time, but hear of no contrasting earlier or later sexual activity. It has been suggested by another reviewer that McGuinness's reticence may have been required by some of Wittgenstein's executors as the price of access to his files, but I do not believe this. It is too much of a piece with the old-fashioned donnishness visible in McGuinness's inability to deal with the psychological and cultural complexity of Wittgenstein's affective life in general.

Wittgenstein's misogyny is noted but not commented on (he was against women's suffrage because "all the women he knows are such idiots"). It is left unconnected with either the European culture of the time or with his idea of his mother as "someone he had to support, not a source of strength to him" and the fact that after his father's death, Wittgenstein had difficulty visiting his family, "a largely female family to whose standards he did not feel ready to submit."

McGuinness finds it "unimportant" that Weininger's *Sex and Character*, widely read at the beginning of the century and a major influence on young Ludwig, identified the drive to truth, goodness and strength with the male, and that to sexuality and weakness with the female principle. Weininger's suicide, apparently provoked by his despair at being homosexual and Jewish (both identified in his theory as feminine characteristics) is claimed to have had little resonance with Wittgenstein's feelings, though Ludwig too spoke of his Jewishness as barring the way to originality, and in later years seems to have wished to hide it. McGuinness sees as praiseworthy patriotism Wittgenstein's admission during the war that "the thought that our race is going to be beaten depresses me terribly, because I am completely German," though he also felt that the English were "the best race in the world" and would therefore win. But McGuinness himself is prone to speak in terms of race; he also has a notable enthusiasm for military history, explaining the Austrian eastern campaigns with more care than the logic of Russell's Paradox. So it is not surprising that he is touched by Wittgenstein's donation of a million crowns to the Austrian government for the purchase of a twelve-inch howitzer.

The big question posed by a biography like this one is that—evoked so nicely by Russell's story—of the relation between the demons of Wittgenstein's emotional life and the pull that logical analysis exercised on him. Clearly, the absolutism of logic was attractive to one who often felt so out of control as to be on the verge of suicide. In the preface to the *Tractatus*, he says that he has, by rigorous methods, solved the basic problems of philosophy. At the same time, he continues, his book "shows how little is achieved when these problems are solved." It showed, in fact, that the truly important problems—of ethics, aesthetics and "the sense of the world"—are not to be dealt with by philosophy. Peace of the self, "the solution of the problem of life," is to be achieved not through discursive thought but through a mystical experience of the world "as a limited whole," an experience seemingly led to by the argument of the *Tractatus* itself.

These views represented a fundamental break with the academic philosophy of the period before World War I, especially that of the English philosophers who were Wittgenstein's closest intellectual companions. The idealism of Bradley, McTaggart and their followers, which dominated British philosophy until 1900, held that reality is a whole whose resolution into parts must involve an element of falsification; true knowledge can only be knowledge of the totality. At the turn of the century Russell and Moore, each in his way, challenged this by asserting that mathematical, natural-scientific and moral knowledge are all matters of a relation between individual minds and independent objects in the world. While agreeing that the knowable world consists

THE MANTIS' PRAYER

The praying mantis clings to the twig's
underside, peers at the over-
cast, and asks for another day
like this: the yellow leaf-scent,
and the sun, dipping toward Capricorn.

A silhouette against the water's gloss,
on a gray log, she writes
the same request. I slide my fingers
up her backbone's curve. The ink
keeps running. And tomorrow
the train will wind her back to Boston.

Down the arcs of sand, past
the lighthouse and the strength of my eyes,
Palisades warms the current,
offering halflives. But today, the insect's
music is oblivious to the frost. She stands,
asking: "Do you feel it? This is us."

We stroll the stone-rumpled beach,
and facing the green years of water,
complete a triangle with the sun
and its reflection. As if we three
could postpone the tilt of the earth.

David Kuenzi

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of a plurality of autonomous items—facts, or states of affairs—Wittgenstein opposed his friends' realism as well as the earlier idealism by holding that philosophy of the traditional sort could not be meaningfully done at all.

Just as basic to the importance of Wittgenstein's place in modern philosophy was the method by which he reached this conclusion. In his work the analysis of ideas or concepts, central to Western philosophical investigation since its Greek origins, was replaced by the analysis of language. In this Wittgenstein was a pioneer of contemporary thought beyond the domain of philosophy, as language has emerged in all intellectual fields—from molecular biology's discovery of the "genetic code" to Barthes's decoding of the "fashion system"—as the dominant metaphor for meaningful structure. This reflects the increasingly important place in modern culture of various modes of communication and what that culture so characteristically terms "information management," on the one hand, and our increasing consciousness of the socially constructed character of all forms of meaning, on the other. The focus on language, in addition, has the ideological advantage (both expressed and aided by the displacement of historical by structural linguistics) of recognizing the constructive nature of culture, in a practice defined by relatively fixed, unconsciously operative structures: a practice that, though man-made, has the appearance of a natural function.

As carried out in the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein's shift to the analysis of language rested on a few presuppositions: first, that thought, as the substance of human knowledge of reality, could be identified with language; and second, that logic yields the underlying structure (the "logical form") of language. The logic developed by Frege and Russell for the analysis of mathematical statements treats sentences as complexes formed from elementary sentences in such a way that the truth or falsity of a complex sentence is exclusively a function of the truth or falsity of its constituent parts. Accepting this as a model of language generally, Wittgenstein reasoned that the truth or falsity of elementary sentences must be determined by their correspondence to the facts constituting reality. What gave the notion of "correspondence" its content was his idea of how linguistic signs bear meaning.

This was the "picture theory" of language. Sentences are formed out of objects—signs—placed in fixed relations to one another. The individual signs correspond to, or name, other objects, things in the world; the relations between signs correspond to the relations between things that group them into facts. An elementary sentence can thus be thought of as a picture of a fact, and an accurate picture is a truth. The totality of such truths—descriptions of facts—is everything that can be meaningfully said about the world.

What cannot be spoken of (or, therefore, thought), according to Wittgenstein, is the structure of sentences, which makes meaningful speech possible. Sentences "can present the whole of reality, but they cannot represent what they must have in common with reality in order to represent it—logical form." This is a very deep point indeed: that because we can only talk about language *in* language, any attempt to explain linguistic meaning must assume it. In other words, there is no standpoint we can take outside of language from which to represent the relation between language and the world ("The limits of my language mean the limits of my world"). But while sentences cannot state what makes meaning possible, they "*show* the logical form of reality." Our relation to the world as knowers, therefore, cannot be described but only shown. The same must, Wittgenstein asserted, be true of other aspects of our relation to reality, such as our experience of life as good or evil: "*How* things are in the world" (what can be said) "is a matter of complete indifference for what is higher" (how we judge it from an ethical or aesthetic point of view).

It follows from all this that the *Tractatus* itself, which after all is a discussion of exactly those things it claims can be shown but not said, is in Wittgenstein's own words "nonsensical," a ladder to be discarded after one has used it to climb. The very irrationality of this position, one could say, is an expression of Wittgenstein's point. It certainly makes a heady brew for the undergraduate and even the professorial mind. The call for a combination of scientific precision with recognition of the limits of rationality was echoed by many, in many ways, in the 1920s and 1930s. It is, for example, a guiding theme of Musil's *The Man Without Qualities* and can be felt both in art movements as disparate as futurism and surrealism and in the Nietzsche revival of that time. The *Tractatus* had a strong effect on the positivist philosophers of the Vienna Circle, whose program was based

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on the distinction drawn between what can and what cannot be meaningfully said. If today this book has lost its original power this is largely because assumptions fundamental to it have been rejected—in the first place by Wittgenstein himself.

Wittgenstein came to view as incorrect both the idea that logic is the key to language and that language has its meaning in a correspondence of descriptive sentences to facts in the world. He continued, however, to identify language as the substance of thought and to see the limits of language as the limits of the world. But this had in his later work quite different implications than in his earlier writings, for he came to think of language not as one thing, a sign system for factual description and scientific theory, but as a congeries of what a more current jargon calls "signifying practices" or "discourses," used quite as legitimately for praying, moral judgment or poetic play.

It is Wittgenstein's later work that is really alive in today's philosophical world. One striking feature of it is the focus on the errors embodied in the *Tractatus*. This, in fact, has helped to generate continued scholarly interest in the early work, a remarkable epitome of contemporary philosophy's tendency to keep itself alive by feeding on its own past. Beyond this, the ease with which the intellectual buzzwords of recent decades can be slipped into a discussion of the later Wittgenstein suggests how he has come to figure as the leading philosopher of our time, not only among philosophers but also among literary theorists, art writers and other intellectual movers and shakers (along with their readerships), many of whom have little familiarity with or understanding of his work.

It is no accident that Bruce Duffy's biographical novel *The World as I Found It* opens with Wittgenstein's celebrated figure of the "duck-rabbit," a drawing that can be seen as depicting either of the two animals. Wittgenstein's use of it in his *Investigations* metaphorically expresses the idea that the signs we use for communication, far from showing their signifying relation to the world, have no such relations beyond those given by the various complex social behaviors in which they have a role. This commonsense conventionalism resonates beyond its theoretical context in the minds of those for whom the contemporary world seems to hold no alternative to cognitive, ethical and aesthetic relativism. The Wittgenstein of the *Investigations* is, if you wish, a "postmodern" philosopher: in his emphasis on language as the stuff of cultural experience; in his portrayal of the human world not as unified by some general principles of meaning but as a multitude of "forms of life," each with its own "language game"; in his consequent abandonment of the right claimed by modern philosophy, since its seventeenth-century origins, to pass critical judgment on cultural institutions; and even in the role played in the diffusion of his fame by his cranky, commanding personality and oracular style.

Though his name has been linked with Marx's (for example, in a 1981 study by David Rubenstein), Wittgenstein's vague concept of "forms of life" and his ahistorical critique of the main features of modern philosophy as due, roughly, to misuse and misunderstanding of ordinary language, recognize the social character of human experience without requiring too close a look at the particularities of social structure. Summary comments on a complex figure are bound to be distorting. But certainly the deep response elicited by both his earlier and his later writings and teaching shows that Wittgenstein's ideas, for all their abstruseness, incarnate some basic elements of the periods in which he lived. The biographer who succeeds in telling the tale of the development of this man and his work will also shed much light on the transformations of modern culture as it has felt its way through two world wars to the problematic present. □

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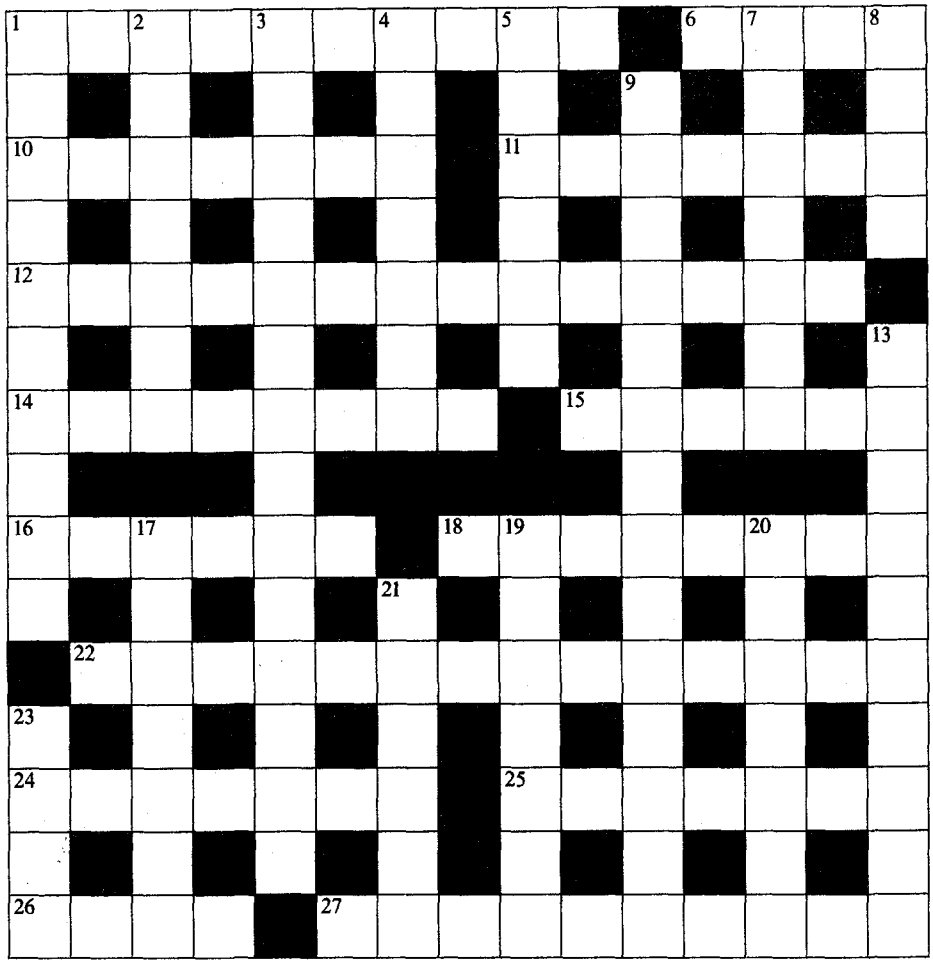

ACROSS

1 and 6 Sounds like a nice crossing, but that's what you get when roughed up. (1,4,5-4)
10 Were they once carried in pairs? (Ham possibly went with them.) (7)
11 The one with the eagles sounds like a real nut! (7)
12 There are probably a number of stories connected with this, possibly because some of the people there are high livers. (9,5)
14 A type of converter said to return to the troubled east. (8)
15 The place of Linnaeus should be well known, but when it comes up, it has a discouraging sound which is wrong. (6)
16 An old instrument (and French) for the reputedly shy type. (6)
18 Not a very important happening, which might be shortly incorporated with one fender-bender souvenir. (8)
22 One of judgment, or just a time for informal thought? (3,2,9)
24 A horse might be delayed (or cut out, if something is mechanized.) (7)
25 "Soul" for everything—that's what one should believe in! (7)
26 At least such a ceremony sounds correct! (4)
27 Place a barrier on rather common rest-room signs—one of them could be cleaner! (10)

DOWN

1 and 17 Poached eggs on toast, as some say—a picture of paradise, for river enthusiasts! (4,3,3,2,1,4)
2 Contained in a book in a Washington library, or an atlas should have it. (7)
3 Considered by everyone as being "passed on"? (Certainly not a state of awareness.) (4,2,3,5)
4 They were invited to a beach picnic—perhaps because they're comparatively dumb! (7)
5 A small point, but a good one! (6)
7 The woman who takes the leading part, to a point—and ends up with a fool . . . (7)
8 . . . which might be a characterization. (4)
9 A captain of the cinema, causing corruption and septicemia.(5,9)
13 Being thrown is about the opening of what the most severe critic does. (10)
17 See 1 down
19 To make something about as good as a nod, as they say? (It's rather pleasant to do lacework in it.) (7)
20 The bulldog was the earliest one. (7)
21 Wild bird with the French, but a form of control to the English. (6)
23 Somewhat un-sure employer. (4)

SEE LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION AT LEFT

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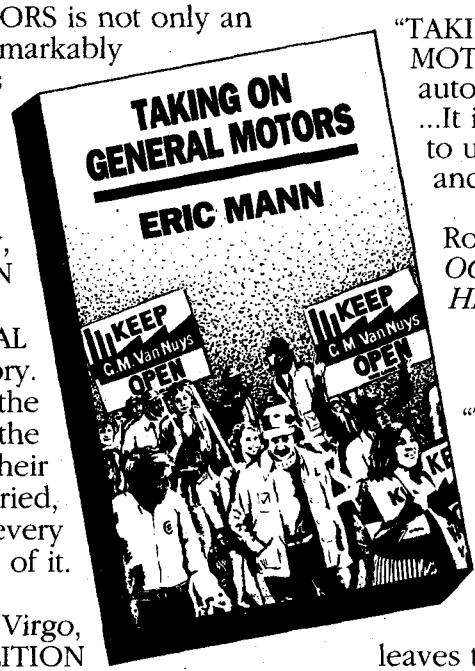

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